

Members' Library Service Request Form

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Designation	Head of Policy & Partnerships
Date	28/06/13

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REPORT TO: Members' Library Service

DATE:

BY: Head of Policy & Partnerships

SUBJECT: East Lothian Council Museums Service Policies

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To advise Members about the updates and revisions to the following East Lothian Council Museums Service Policies as required to meet the requirements of the Museums Accreditation Scheme:

- Collections Development Policy (formerly part of the Collections Policy)
- Collections Care and Conservation Policy (formerly part of the Collections Policy)
- Documentation Policy (formerly part of the Collections Policy)
- Access Policy

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Members note the content of this report.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 East Lothian Council Museums Service manages the following museums: Prestongrange Museum, the John Gray Centre Museum and Dunbar Town House Museum and Gallery. The Service also manages John Muir's Birthplace in Dunbar on behalf of the John Muir Birthplace Trust and supports Musselburgh Museum and Heritage group to operate Musselburgh Museum. Dunbar and District History Society support the operation of Dunbar Town House Museum and Gallery. A Museums Education Service is offered throughout the County and the Museum Collection is held in Haddington in an environmentally controlled store.

- 3.2 Prestongrange Museum, Dunbar Town House Museum and Gallery and the John Muir's Birthplace are all Accredited Museums under the Museum Accreditation Scheme. This baseline quality scheme is the UK standard for museums and galleries. It defines good practice and identifies agreed standards thereby encouraging development.
- 3.3 The Accreditation standard has recently been updated and ELC Museums have been invited to reapply. As part of this several policies have been updated and slightly reformatted. The Collections Policy (as was) has been broken up into three distinct policies, Collections Development, Collections Care and Conservation and Documentation. The content of the policies has been revised and enhanced and gathered together as a Collections Management Framework. This framework describes, structures and guides what is and can be collected, how it is cared for and how ELC Museums Service organises collections information.
- 3.4 It is also a requirement of the Accreditation standard to have an Access Policy statement. ELC Museums Service exceeds this requirement through having an Access Policy (originally written in 2005). This has been reviewed and updated for Accreditation 2013. The Access Policy describes how ELC Museum Service provides access to the collections for all and guides how this can be improved and enhanced.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Museums Access Policy and Collections Development Framework support the strategic objectives of the ELC Heritage Strategy, 2007 – 2010.

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The Access Policy and Collections Management Framework have been written within an extensive framework of internal ELC guidelines, plans and policies as well as external professional guidance and relevant legislation.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 **Financial** - There are no financial implications.
- 6.2 **Personnel** - There are no personnel implications.
- 6.3 **Other** - There are no other implications.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Collections Development Policy.
- 7.2 Collections Care and Conservation Policy.
- 7.3 Documentation Policy.
- 7.4 Access Policy.

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East Lothian Council Museums Service
Collections Development Policy

June 2013

Name of museum: East Lothian Council Museums Service

Name of governing body: East Lothian Council

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: June 2013

Date at which this policy is due for review: June 2018

Introduction

This policy regulates the acquisition and disposal of items by East Lothian Council Museums Service (hereafter referred to as ELCMS) in respect of those collections it manages on behalf of East Lothian Council.

A formally approved Collections Development Policy is a requirement of the Accreditation Scheme as administered by Arts Council England for Museums in the United Kingdom. It is a statement of intent, reflects the purpose of ELCMS and provides the basis for the development of the collections. Its revision over time is a reflection that ELCMS is evolving and adapting to changing circumstances.

This policy is subject to review and renewal 5 years after receiving formal approval. Any changes of substance in the interim will be subject to the approval of East Lothian Council, and will be notified to the Scottish administrator of the Accreditation Scheme (presently Museums Galleries Scotland).

ELCMS is defined as the following premises, staff and collections:

- Museums Headquarters and Store (Dunbar Road, Haddington);
- Dunbar Town House Museum and Gallery;
- Prestongrange Museum (Prestonpans);
- John Muir's Birthplace Museum (Dunbar);
- The John Gray Centre Museum (Haddington);
- The Museum Stores at Musselburgh Museum;
- Paintings and other works of art, normally held in other Council premises, are generally recognised as being the responsibility of the Museums Service.

The following community museums are operated by charities and come under the umbrella of ELCMS as formal partners:

- Musselburgh Museum (operated by Musselburgh Museum and Heritage Group);
- The Coastal Communities Museum (operated by the Coastal Communities Museum Trust).

The term "Museum" is used in a functional sense, and may at all times be taken to subsume the terms "Gallery", "Art Gallery", "Heritage Centre" or otherwise as appropriate.

1. Statement of purpose

"Preserving and presenting East Lothian's cultural heritage."

Preserving includes collecting, documenting and conserving the physical and intellectual evidence of East Lothian's cultural heritage as outlined in the Collections Development Policy.

Presenting covers all aspects of facilitating access to the collections to information about the collections and to the information contained within the collection items as outlined in this policy. It also includes the presentation of aspects of the cultural heritage which East Lothian shares in common with the wider community in Scotland, the UK and across the world, for example in the areas of art, history, science and the natural world.

2. An overview of current collections

There are currently 14,718 items listed on the collections database. There are approximately 1500 items awaiting retrospective documentation. The collection has been made up as follows:

Description of Items	Number of Items	% of Collection
Donations	5374	36.5
Purchases	679	4.6
Loans	382	2.6
Transfers	0	0
Unknown Source	8283	56.3
Total	14718	100

2.1 Background

Collecting prior to the establishment of ELCMS in 1990 was on a passive basis in all subject areas. This resulted in patchy, biased collections with many gaps to be filled. The existence of a museum at North Berwick since 1957 has led to better representation in the Collection of the town and area than other parts of East Lothian. The collection as it stands now includes a reasonable geographic spread across the region (from Musselburgh in the West to Dunbar in the East, the Firth of Forth to the North and the Lammermuir Hills to the South) with a better representation of the larger communities. A description of the collection by subject area follows in section 2.2.

Since March 1997 the Collection has been housed in a purpose built store at Library and Museums Headquarters, Dunbar Road, Haddington. Increased space and environmental control has allowed objects to be collected which could not have been given appropriate storage in the past. Collecting will continue to take into consideration constraints of storage and conservation requirements combined with an attempt to prevent duplication of objects collected.

2.2 Description of Existing Collections

2.2.1 Social History

This collection comprises the bulk of the collections held by the ELCMS, the material of which shall be considered to encompass four broad subject areas:

- I. Domestic Life
- II. Working Life
- III. Community Life
- IV. Seaside Holidays

2.2.1.1 Domestic Life

This represents a substantial proportion of the collection and includes household items pertaining to food, drink, clothing, hobbies, pastimes and childhood. More recent acquisitions have included toys, everyday clothing and twentieth century kitchen equipment. Attempts to broaden the scope of the collections to reflect the diversity of daily life in East Lothian with regard to culture, geographic location etc., will continue.

2.2.1.2 Working Life

The working life collections include objects representing local industries and products - agriculture, mining, fishing, manufacturing, retailing and the service industries. Most of the traditional industries of East Lothian (including agriculture, mining, fishing and milling) and the associated crafts (including net-making, pottery, salt-panning, textiles, glass making) were under-represented in the collection in the early 1990s. Holdings of this type of material and of agricultural material have improved over recent years.

Recent acquisitions have included material representing Cockenzie Power Station and Brunton's Wire Mill.

Material from the full range of industries in the Prestonpans area continues to be a collecting priority, together with material from industries based outwith the Tranent/Prestonpans/Musselburgh area. Examples of occupational costume are also desirable.

2.2.1.3 Community Life

Community Life collections include objects relating to all levels of local government, church, education, health, welfare, the military, law enforcement, societies, organisations and public entertainment. Geographically this aspect of the collection is representative; material evidence of the churches of North Berwick, Haddington and elsewhere is reasonable. Friendly Societies are well represented; a quantity of military uniforms has been collected however collections relating to health and education are patchy.

Objects representing the smaller rural communities in East Lothian are a priority area for collecting, as are items that relate to social groups that are currently under-represented in the collections, such as Black and Minority Ethnic groups, recent incomers or disabled people.

2.2.1.4 Seaside Holidays

Existing collections include a large number of photographs and postcards, souvenirs, ephemera and documents, camping, picnic and beach equipment, costume, North Berwick's last beach hut and the only remaining rowing boat from Dunbar's outdoor pool. All destinations on East Lothian's coast are represented, but North Berwick and Dunbar dominate.

Work on a digitisation project in the 1990s meant that this part of the collection is particularly well-documented. Building on this foundation, a second phase of the digitisation project extended the scope to seaside holidays in the rest of Scotland. Accordingly, objects of a similar nature to those of an East Lothian provenance already held, but from outwith East Lothian were also collected for the duration of the project (see also section 3).

Future collecting will focus on improving the scope and geographical distribution of the holdings and will also include items representing the newer tourist attractions in the region.

2.2.2 Natural History

A substantial collection of local natural history is held. Some specimens have suffered light damage from long term display but the majority is in reasonable condition.

Most local birds are represented, particularly seabirds and there is a large collection of birds eggs. Some of the animals are no longer found locally (e.g. Golden Eagle) but examples in the collection could be used to show effects of changes in habitat etc. The collection of mammals is small. Most butterflies and moths in the collection are exotic species and future collecting will only consider local examples. Local species of marine invertebrates are represented; some examples were acquired for the handling collection only and are not part of the collection. Fish are also reasonably represented.

Some of the taxidermy was done by local people and is of high quality as well as local interest. Should the opportunity arise, additional relevant examples of this work will be acquired.

Additions to the collection over recent years have been collected for the purposes of handling/education sessions, and have been much used both by the Museums Education Service and by the Countryside Ranger Service.

Additions will be sought to represent local species of mammal, insects, reptiles, fish and amphibians where a need arises for display or educational/handling use. The overall collecting objective is to build up a representative collection of local wildlife.

2.2.3 Archaeology

There is a small collection of prehistoric material, either unprovenanced or from local sites such as Tantallon Castle. There are examples of the internationally important tiles from North Berwick Priory. There is some replica material of significant finds in the collection and it is a useful display resource. A good collection of industrial material has come into the collection relating to the site at Prestongrange following a community archaeology project.

A number of objects have been acquired through Treasure Trove, including a Bronze Age beaker, and a number of stone anchors were acquired through the Receiver of Wreck.

Future collecting will be in accordance with all relevant legislation, from properly conducted archaeological excavations or such material as may be allocated to the ELCMS under the Treasure Trove procedure.

2.2.4 Geology

A small miscellaneous collection of local and non-local rocks, minerals and fossils, mainly of British origin, is held.

Future collecting will aim to represent the rich geological heritage of East Lothian, particularly with regard to changes in rock formation, and relate to extractive industries, etc.

2.2.5 Numismatics

There is small miscellaneous collection of Scottish and British coins, some trade tokens and commemorative medals. In addition there is a significant collection of local communion tokens. There is some material relating to the failed East Lothian Bank.

Development of the numismatic collection will be restricted to coins, notes, medals and tokens with a particular connection to East Lothian, or such as may be required for display purposes. Coins recovered during the course of archaeological excavations will be accepted alongside other excavated material.

2.2.6 Visual Arts

There is a miscellaneous collection of works of art on paper and canvas. The main strength lies in local history and topography. A bias to works depicting North Berwick has been corrected by recent acquisitions which have focused on significant East Lothian artists such as WD MacKay and John Bellany.

Future collecting objectives will be to acquire works of art depicting local views and subjects and to represent the work of significant local artists past and present. Work by an East Lothian artist could be acquired notwithstanding the subject of the work, if considered appropriate.

2.2.7 Applied Arts

The collection contains a mixture of ceramics, glass, furniture and textiles of local and non-local origin. Belfield and Makmerry pottery is represented, as well as non-local items. A small collection of glassware from the eighteenth century to the present includes table and decorative items, including glass rolling pins.

A priority will be extending holdings of East Lothian made ceramics. Collecting priorities will be locally made ceramics, glass and decorative textiles. Examples of the work of the early Prestonpans potteries and contemporary artists and crafts people are particularly desirable. Furniture should be locally manufactured or types commonly used in East Lothian. One East Lothian clock is in the collection, and attempts to record the work of local craftsmen shall continue. Items provenanced to but not made in East Lothian may be collected if considered appropriate for specific purposes of representation.

2.2.8 Site Specific Collections

Cutting across the themes described above there are significant collections relating to the former uses, users and occupants of the historic buildings in which the ELCMS museums and partner community museums are housed. Therefore, it remains a priority to continue to collect objects, photographs and ephemera relating to the following sites/venues:

- John Muir's boyhood homes in Dunbar and the Dunbar of his childhood
- the Prestongrange site
- Dunbar Town House and High Street
- 65 High Street, Musselburgh and Musselburgh High Street
- the Old School, School Road, North Berwick
- the buildings that make up the John Gray Centre

2.2.9 Oral History Collections

There is a small collection of oral history recordings, generally undertaken in relation to exhibition or display work. This will continue in discussion with colleagues in the Archives and Local History Service.

3. Themes and priorities for future collecting

3.1 Introduction

The general intention of the policy shall be to strengthen the scope of the existing collections by filling gaps to reflect the objectives of the Museums Service, namely to seek to preserve, safeguard and communicate material evidence of East Lothian's cultural heritage and to encourage the participation of the local community in this process for the purposes of study, education and enjoyment. Specific collecting areas and priorities are articulated under section 2.

It is a priority to collect items suitable for handling and use in educational and community projects. Items collected for the handling collection are owned by ELCMS but not accessioned into the collections.

Material representing seaside holidays outside East Lothian (see section 2.2.1.4) will no longer actively be collected. This area of the collection is closed.

Digital material will be collected where relevant (digital artwork for example) with careful consideration given to storage and access requirements.

3.2 Collecting Partnerships

The ELCMS works in partnership with the following organisations:

- i) Musselburgh Museum and Heritage Group operate Musselburgh Museum under contract to East Lothian Council
- ii) Dunbar and District History Society operate two rooms in Dunbar Town House under contract to East Lothian Council. One room is used for exhibitions the other for a research collection of local history material.
- iii) ELCMS operates John Muir's Birthplace Museum under a Management Agreement with the John Muir's Birthplace Trust.
- iv) ELCMS are working with the Coastal Communities Museum Trust on the development of a museum in North Berwick, due to open in the summer of 2013. This will be operated under contract with East Lothian Council.

In all of these relationships ELCMS works closely with staff, front of house teams, trustees and volunteers regarding any objects that are offered to the ELC Museum Collections. In each partnership the relevant committee or Board of Trustees has been given a copy of the Collections Development Policy and work has

been done to communicate and raise awareness of it. Induction training and refresher training is also given to front of house staff and volunteers.

Objects that are offered for donation at any of these sites are receipted and processed according to the ELCMS Collections Documentation Policy and Plan.

3.3 Collecting Standard Criteria

The following standard criteria will inform decisions on whether to add material to the collections:

- Relevance, importance and long-term value of the item in the context of existing collections
- Potential use of the object/s for research and/or exhibition
- Condition of the object/s
- The cost of acquisition, including purchase price, VAT, transport costs, immediate conservation costs, documentation and research costs
- The ability to provide long-term care and access and the cost of providing such care and access
- Existing resources and its long term sustainability
- The options for preservation in situ
- The interests of other accredited museums, archives and public institutions
- The quality of supporting documentation particularly contextual information
- The object's provenance, especially confirmation of legal title of the present holder and the right of the holder to transfer title to East Lothian Council.

4. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

Museums meet their responsibility to future generations by ensuring that collections are well-managed and sustainable. There is a strong presumption in favour of retention of items within the public domain. Responsible, curatorially-motivated disposal takes place as part of the museum's long-term collections policy, in order to increase public benefit derived from the collection. See also section 13 (e) and 13 (f).

The Museums Association's *Code of Ethics for Museums* and *Disposal Toolkit* will be used to guide disposal.

Acceptable Reasons for Disposal

- Removal from the collections of any item which is too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any further use for the purposes of the ELCMS
- Removal of duplicate or unprovenanced material of low intrinsic relevance to ELMS, with reference to the Collections Development Policy
- Public benefit better served by transferral to a body better able to provide access to, use and care of an item
- Removal of any item which, on the basis of professional advice, is an immediate and substantial health and safety risk to staff and/or public

5. Limitations on collecting

The ELCMS recognises its responsibility, in acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard. Accordingly, it will abide by the ICOM Code of Ethics and the UK Museum's Association's Code of Ethics. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

6. Collecting policies of other museums

ELCMS will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of

interest may arise or to define areas of specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

Specific reference is made to the following museum(s)/organisations:

National Mining Museum of Scotland
National Museums Scotland, including National Museum of Flight
Scottish Railway Preservation Society
Summerlee, The Museum of Scottish Industrial Life
Myreton Motor Museum
Scottish Borders Council Museum Service
City of Edinburgh Council Museums Service
Musselburgh Museum
The Coastal Communities Museum
East Lothian Council Archive and Local History Service
Dunbar and District History Society
The Friends of John Muir's Birthplace
Prestongrange Railway Society

7. Policy review procedure

The collections development policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. The date when the policy is next due for review is noted above.

Museums Galleries Scotland will be notified of any changes to the Collections Development Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.

8. Acquisitions not covered by the policy

Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by East Lothian Council, having regard to the interests of other museums.

9. Acquisition procedures

The Principal Museums Officer is defined as being the professional officer responsible to the Council through the Head of Policy and Partnerships for the operation of the Museums Service according to proper professional standards. The Museums Officer must have a relevant degree; have achieved the Associateship of the Museums Association, and have experience of the principles and practice of museum operation and management as may be determined to be acceptable by Museums Galleries Scotland.

Items offered to the ELCMS as gifts or bequests will not normally be accepted if they are subject to any restrictive covenant or special conditions, such as that they be displayed in a particular way. In exceptional circumstances, if the Principal Museums Officer considers that the item(s) in question are of over-riding importance, the acquisition of a specific item to which conditions are attached may be approved.

- a. ELCMS will exercise due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.

No item will be received on "permanent loan", a term which has no legal status (although defined long-term loans are acceptable).

- b. In particular, ELCMS will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).
- c. In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002, ELCMS will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. East Lothian Council will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.
- d. So far as biological and geological material is concerned, ELCMS will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.
- e. ELCMS will not acquire archaeological antiquities (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures.

In Scotland, under the laws of *bona vacantia* including Treasure Trove, the Crown has title to all ownerless objects including antiquities. Scottish archaeological material cannot therefore be legally acquired by means other than by allocation to ELCMS by the Crown. Where the Crown chooses to forego its title to a portable antiquity, a Curator or other responsible person acting on behalf of the ELCMS, can establish that valid title to the item in question has been acquired by ensuring that a certificate of 'No Claim' has been issued on behalf of the Crown.

No excavated or archaeological material will be purchased unless the Principal Museums Officer can be reasonably certain that the circumstances of excavation or recovery did not involve recent unauthorised destruction of, or damage to, ancient monuments, known archaeological sites or places of special scientific or historic interest, or failure to disclose finds to the owner or occupier of the land where found, or to any proper authority.

- f. Any exceptions to the above clauses 9a, 9b, 9c, or 9e will only be because ELCMS is:
 - acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
 - acquiring an item of minor importance that lacks secure ownership history but in the best judgement of experts in the field concerned has not been illicitly traded
 - acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin
 - in possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970

In these cases ELCMS will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

- g. As ELCMS holds or intends to acquire human remains from any period, it will follow the guidelines in the 'Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Scottish Museums' issued by Museums Galleries Scotland in 2011.

10. Spoliation

ELCMS will use the statement of principles 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period', issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission.

11. The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

East Lothian Council, acting on the advice of the museum's professional staff, if any, may take a decision to return human remains, objects or specimens to a country or people of origin (unless covered by the 'Guidelines for the care of human remains in Scottish museum collections' published by MGS in 2011). The museum will take such decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance. This will mean that the procedures described in 13a-13d, 13g and 13o below will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

12. Management of archives

As ELCMS holds archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, East Lothian Council will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (third edition, 2002).

13. Disposal procedures

Disposal preliminaries

- a. East Lothian Council will ensure that the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency.
- b. By definition, ELCMS has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for society in relation to its stated objectives. East Lothian Council therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons for disposal must be established before consideration is given to the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.
- c. ELCMS will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item and agreements on disposal made with donors will be taken into account.
- d. When disposal of a museum object is being considered, ELCMS will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.

Motivation for disposal and method of disposal

- e. When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined in paragraphs 13g-13o will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift or sale.
- f. The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons

The disposal decision-making process

- g. Whether the disposal is motivated either by curatorial or financial reasons, the decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by East Lothian Council only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including the public benefit, the implications for the museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. External expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the museum will also be sought.

Responsibility for disposal decision-making

- h. A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of East Lothian Council acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator of the collection acting alone.

Use of proceeds of sale

- i. Any monies received by East Lothian Council from the disposal of items will be applied for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from Museums Galleries Scotland.
- j. The proceeds of a sale will be ring-fenced so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard.

Disposal by gift or sale

- k. Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain, unless it is to be destroyed. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- l. If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museums to which it was offered directly as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material, normally through an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal, and in other specialist journals where appropriate.
- m. The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, ELCMS may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.

Disposal by exchange

- n. ELCMS will not dispose of items by exchange.

Documenting disposal

- o. Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with SPECTRUM Procedure on de-accession and disposal.

Appendix 1

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED IN THE POLICY

Note: where applicable the singular includes the plural and vice versa

Accession: the formal, legal process of recording an object or group of objects into the permanent collection.

Arts Council England (ACE) Museum Accreditation Scheme: the scheme administered by ACE which assigns accredited status to UK museums meeting the standards set out in its publication *The Accreditation Standard*.

Acquisition: the administrative, decision-making and documentation processes whereby objects are added to the collections including recording core object data to agreed standards as described in the Documentation Manual.

Collections: any item entered in the Accession Registers of the ELCMS, whether as gift, or purchase, together with any item not entered in the Accession Registers, but in the possession of the Museums Service at 1/9/1990, which was donated or purchased with the intention that it should become part of the Collections

Cultural Heritage: material which is of importance for archaeology, pre-history, history, literature or science

De-accessioning: the formal, legal act of removing an object from the Permanent Collection; part of the disposal procedure.

Disposal: the administrative, decision-making and documentation process of removing an object from the permanent collection, whether by free transfer, sale, exchange or destruction.

Due diligence: The requirement to make every endeavour to establish the facts of a case before deciding a course of action, particularly in identifying the source and history of an item offered for acquisition or use. (International Council of Museums – ICOM - Code of Ethics)

Duplicate: an object of which more than one or multiple examples exist.

Handling collection: items that are expressly intended for demonstration or education handling activities; are owned by the Museum but not accessioned.

Loan: managing and documenting the borrowing of objects for which the Museum is responsible for a specific period of time and for a specified purpose, normally exhibition or display and managing and documenting the loan of objects to other organizations or individuals for a specific period of time and for a specific purpose, normally exhibitions.

Object: cultural property which may form part of an organization's permanent or temporary (i.e., loan or deposit) collections.

Transfer of title: the formal, legal documentation of change of ownership of an object.

Valid title: is defined as valid legal ownership

East Lothian Council Museums Service

Collections Care and Conservation Policy

Approval date: June 2013

Review date: June 2018

1.0 Purpose and Introduction

Caring for collections is a fundamental duty for all museums. This policy applies to all East Lothian Council Museums Service (ELCMS) collections and objects in ELCMS care (e.g. loans). The purpose of this policy is:

- To promote the preservation of collections and buildings in the care of ELCMS
- To maximise the safe use and access to collections, making cost-effective and sustainable use of resources
- To support the Business Plan of the ELCMS
- To guide preventative and remedial conservation of the collections

1.1 The ELCMS statement of purpose is:

“Preserving and presenting East Lothian’s cultural heritage.”

Preserving includes collecting, documenting and conserving the physical and intellectual evidence of East Lothian’s cultural heritage as outlined in the Collections Development Policy.

Presenting covers all aspects of facilitating access to the collections to information about the collections and to the information contained within the collection items as outlined in this policy. It also includes the presentation of aspects of the cultural heritage which East Lothian shares in common with the wider community in Scotland, the UK and across the world, for example in the areas of art, history, science and the natural world.

2.0 Overview

The following factors will be considered in this policy:

- Section 3: Planning
- Section 4: Context (Ethics, Standards and Legislation)
- Section 5: Preventative conservation
- Section 6: Remedial conservation
- Section 7: Storage
- Section 8: Audit and condition checking
- Section 9: Environmental monitoring and control
- Section 10: Housekeeping
- Section 11: Sustainability
- Section 12: Working machinery
- Section 13: Training and dissemination
- Section 14: Access to collections including handling and moving objects and exhibitions, displays and loans
- Section 15: Risk Management including security and emergency planning

3.0 Planning

- 3.1 Collections care is a key part of the work of the Museums Service, and as such it is at the core of the forward planning process. Each forward plan includes a programme to institute improvements in collections care to ensure that necessary improvements are made over time, on the basis of priority. This policy has been written in accordance with the ELCMS Statement of Purpose and the Collections Development Policy. All staff (paid and volunteer) have read and agreed to abide by the policy. The policy should be read in conjunction with the current Business Plan, Emergency Manual and Plan, Documentation Policy and any other plans/policies affecting the collection and the ELCMS buildings.
- 3.2 Forward planning of collections care activity draws on spot checks on items on display and in storage, analysis of the collections database to get an overview of the condition of the collection, and service priorities such as exhibitions. The general condition of the collection is reviewed annually to enable improvements to be prioritised. Recommendations for action are produced and included in the service forward plan as well as the forward job plans of relevant members of staff. These are articulated in the Conservation and Collections Care Plan which is reviewed and updated on an annual basis.
- 3.3 The Conservation and Collection Care Plan sets out the way the Conservation and Collection Care will be put into action:
- monitoring and improving environmental conditions including temperature, relative humidity, light and dust
 - managing the threat from pests
 - housekeeping
 - conservation cleaning of objects on open display
 - documentation of the condition of the collection and of any treatments carried out on objects
 - storage materials and methods
 - display materials and methods
 - transport methods
- 3.4 ELCMS will compile a conservation strategy in relation to collections and museum sites and buildings over the period of the current business plan (2013-2016).

4.0 Context (Ethics, Standards and Legislation)

- 4.1 The ELCMS aims to improve the care and conditions of all its collection in accordance with Spectrum Procedures: Object Condition Checking and Technical Assessment and Conservation and Collections Care.
- 4.2 The ELCMS will incorporate relevant standards such as the *Condition Assessment Tool ('CAT')*, published by Museums Galleries Scotland or *Benchmarks in Collection Care for Museums, Archives and Libraries: A self-assessment checklist* (<http://www.collectionslink.org.uk/programmes/benchmarks-for-collections-care>) into the collections care planning process.
- 4.3 The safety and preservation of the collection will be considered from the outset of any plans to alter the displays or storage or modify the buildings.
- 4.4 We will work to the following legislation and guidelines (this list is not exhaustive):
- Museum Association Code of Ethics
 - Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
 - COSHH Regulations 2002

- Guidelines for the care of human remains in Scottish museum collections published by MGS in 2011

5.0 Preventative Conservation

5.1 *“Preventive conservation covers the measures necessary to slow down or minimise deterioration of museum objects and specimens and structures.” (ACE Accreditation Standard)*

Preventative conservation practices and procedures include:

- Monitoring and control of environmental conditions
- Improvement of storage conditions
- Quarantine procedures and full assessment of the condition of new acquisitions
- Training of staff and volunteers
- Improvement in disaster/emergency procedures

5.2 Preventative conservation activity such as cleaning or minor repair of items is undertaken by staff working under the instruction of a conservator or other appropriately experienced or qualified person. In this regard relevant training in preventative conservation will be sought as need or opportunity arises.

5.3 Records are kept of all conservation work carried out on items in the collections as per the SPECTRUM Procedure: Conservation and Collections Care.

6 Remedial Conservation

6.1 *“Remedial conservation involves a treatment to an object or specimen to bring it to a more acceptable condition or state in order to stabilise it or enhance some aspects of its cultural or scientific value” (ACE Accreditation Standard)* Remedial conservation work includes:

- Work to conserve items, minimising further decay
- Restoration work, with aesthetic and operational considerations in mind
- Production of supports for display or packing

6.2 Remedial conservation is carried out by or under the supervision of a conservator. Any conservator or conservation practice that is contracted to provide advice or services is accredited by ICON and included on the Conservation Register operated by UKIC and, where available, a professionally accredited conservator is used. The museum service has commissioned a number of condition surveys from qualified conservators. These have been used (and will continue to be used) to develop a programme of remedial conservation work on the collections, and to assist in the completion of grant aid applications for conservation work.

6.3 A mutual agreement is to be reached through discussion with relevant parties as to the conservation approach and treatment, etc. with reference to this Conservation and Collections Care Policy, the contemporary Business Plan, any aims and objectives of relevant projects and any other relevant plans, policies or strategies.

6.4 The Principal Museums Officer has delegated responsibility (from ELC) to authorise conservation of items in the ELCMS Collection.

6.5 Records are kept of all conservation work carried out on items in the collections as per the SPECTRUM Procedure: Conservation and Collections Care.

7.0 Storage

7.1 A significant proportion of the ELCMS Collection is not on display at any one time. Therefore, providing appropriate storage conditions for these objects is very important for their preservation.

The bulk of the items in store are housed in the Museums Store located in Library and Museums HQ in Haddington. The store is a modern purpose built air-conditioned space with a stable environment.

- 7.2 The storage space available is currently not used to its greatest potential so the service will undertake projects over the period of the current business plan (2013 – 2016) to rectify this, subject to budgetary constraints.
- 7.3 Necessity means that a small proportion of the Museums Collection is housed in less suitable conditions at Prestongrange Museum and at Musselburgh Museum. The Service will explore the different development possibilities to rectify this situation over the period of the current business plan (2013-2016) with a view to improving the storage conditions of these parts of the collection.
- 7.4 A plan of the museum store is contained in the Documentation Manual and the Conservation and Collections Care Plan
- 7.5 Objects will be stored using materials appropriate to their composition and condition. A list of acceptable storage materials is contained in the Documentation Manual and Conservation and Collections Care Plan.

8.0 Audit and condition checking

- 8.1 ELCMS does not currently have a formal method of audit in relation to the collections. Documentation is kept up to date and a random check on object locations carried out on a regular basis using the computerised database. Searches are initiated using old documentation systems for any items that cannot be located. A note is kept of wrongly or inadequately documented objects, or undocumented objects to allow updating. We will work towards the creation of a system of auditing the collections using the SPECTRUM standards during the period of the current Business Plan (2013-2016).
- 8.2 Condition checking is undertaken on groups or individual objects to assess storage conditions. It can be used to highlight priority areas for action and;
- is only undertaken by qualified/trained individuals,
 - is a planned activity as detailed in the Conservation and Collections Care plan. Condition checking also occurs whenever an object is taken out of storage for any reason, such as loan, research enquiry, exhibition or display,
 - Information is recorded according to the SPECTRUM procedure 'Object Condition Checking and Technical Assessment'.

9.0 Environmental Monitoring and control

- 9.1 Control of the internal environment of buildings, whether actively (e.g. by heating or humidification) or passively (e.g. through natural ventilation or natural lighting) are vital to the preservation of the contents. The environmental conditions of the main store and the main museums display areas are monitored on a regular basis. The results are recorded, evaluated and retained and steps taken to remedy any problems found. The factors taken into consideration are relative humidity, temperature and light levels (visible and ultraviolet) where appropriate.
- 9.2 The Museums Service currently has four Hanwell Telemetric Data Loggers in the Museums Store all connected to the main collections computer. These dataloggers are recalibrated on an annual basis by the manufacturer. Environmental conditions in some display areas are monitored using Tiny Tag data loggers. The Museums Service will aim to upgrade all display areas to have data loggers over the period of the current business plan (2013-2016).

9.3 The buildings used to house collections are regularly inspected taking into account potential threats to collections from, for example, leaky roofs, poor wiring, internal pipe work, blocked gutters and ill-fitting windows or doors. Any problems that are identified and assessed during these inspections are reported to the relevant Officer in ELC Property Department and a programme is put in place to remedy identified faults. Plant and equipment is inspected periodically. Buildings that are unoccupied for all or parts of the year are visited and inspected regularly.

10.0 Housekeeping

10.1 High standards of housekeeping are maintained to reduce the likelihood of problems such as pest infestation occurring. The collections, display and storage areas and furniture are carefully cleaned and visually inspected regularly. Doors are kept closed where possible to minimise incoming pollutants and dust.

10.2 All incoming material and acquisitions are examined for signs of infestation, dampness or mould. Advice is sought on appropriate remedial action and action is taken to deal with any problems identified. All items that show signs of pest infestation are kept isolated from the rest of the collection until treated. Advice is sought and action is taken on appropriate treatments.

10.3 Display and storage areas are monitored for the presence of insects and rodents, and traps are regularly checked. Trapped insects are identified.

11.0 Sustainability

11.1 ELCMS is committed to using sustainable working practices. Over the period of the current Business Plan (2013 – 2016) we will source sustainable storage materials where possible, minimise waste by reusing storage materials where possible/practical and use sustainable working practices at all times (for example lights are turned off in the store when no-one is working there).

12.0 Working machinery

12.1 The ELCMS will draw up a separate policy for the care of historic working items (the locomotive collection) with a volunteer partner group, the Prestongrange Railway Society. This policy is appended in outline format to this policy.

13.0 Training and Dissemination

13.1 As part of their induction, all ELCMS staff and volunteers are made aware of the issues around handling objects and working within a museum environment. Those who have direct contact with collections will receive basic training in object handling. No untrained personnel are allowed to handle items from the collection.

13.2 All partner community museums and societies receive training and updates about collections care in relation to items lent, borrowed, offered for acquisition etc. This training and information is offered to anyone who might come into contact with museum objects or potential museum objects and includes trustees, stewards etc. This training will be reviewed during 2013 with the opening of the Coastal Communities Museum, located in North Berwick.

14 Access to collections

14.1 Handling and Moving Objects

ELCMS is committed to providing access to the collections for the purposes of study, display etc. Information about how to access collections in storage is available online. To ensure the long term care of the collections researchers, volunteers or other visitors working with the collections will be briefed on how to handle the items they are working on and are supervised at all times.

14.2 Handling Collection

The Handling Collection is stored in the main museum store in Haddington. Use of the Handling Collection will be encouraged to provide the experience of handling real artefacts without any risk to the main museum collection. Access to the handling collection will be the responsibility of the Education Officer.

14.3 Exhibitions, Displays and Loans

To ensure the long term preservation of loans or items on display the following factors will be taken into consideration:

- ELCMS will ensure that lenders' conservation requirements can be met before agreeing to borrow objects,
- a risk assessment will be made before the ELCMS agrees to lend objects and if necessary the advice of a conservator will be sought,
- a condition report will be made before the ELCMS lends an object,
- objects borrowed and loaned by ELCMS will be condition checked on arrival and departure,
- the Collections Officer will contribute to the selection of objects for new displays and temporary exhibitions by assessing their condition and advising on work needed,
- records will be kept of the loan and exhibition processes in accordance with Spectrum and a reference to the loan or exhibition should be added to the object's record,
- objects will be displayed in suitable display cases at all times, or arrangements will be made to buffer the environment or protect in less suitable cases. A programme of upgrading or replacing older cases will be undertaken as resources allow,
- specialist trained staff and contractors will be used to handle and transport large, heavy and/or fragile objects.

15 Risk Management, Security and Emergency planning

15.1 Risk Assessment

An appropriately qualified member of staff will carry out an annual risk assessment of storage and display areas as well as one off or temporary display areas. The results of these risk assessments will be used to inform the Conservation and Collections Care Plan to ensure that items at highest risk are prioritised and suggestions for mitigating the risk can be built into the plan.

15.2 Security

Expert assessment of security arrangements for all venues will be obtained during 2013. The recommendations will be reviewed and if accepted they will be implemented over the period of the next forward plan (2013 – 16). The advice in these reports will be carefully considered and discussed and any actions taken will be recorded.

15.2.1 The security arrangements will be reviewed every five years, with the next review due in 2018.

15.2.2 Advice will be sought in the first instance from Lothian and Borders Police Community Safety Officers. These surveys will be conducted in the company of a member of the ELCMS staff and will cover the following: all museum premises (and the main museum store), their immediate locations and the collections, identification of particularly vulnerable collections, an assessment of the physical protection and alarm systems, staff invigilation, inventory check procedures and security arrangements relating to staff and visitors will also be considered.

15.3 Emergency Plan

15.3.1 The ELCMS has compiled an Emergency Manual for each site. The manuals will inform a service wide Emergency Plan, which will be compiled over the period of the current forward plan (2013-

2016) in consultation with relevant partners. This will be informed by the East Lothian Council Corporate Business Continuity Plan. The resultant Emergency Plan will then be revisited and updated on an annual basis, and subject to a full review after 5 years. The Emergency Manual includes:

- the arrangements for staff and visitors
- the arrangements for collections and buildings including salvage arrangements
- risk assessments of threats such as fire, water, theft and vandalism or other disasters
- procedures to be followed by staff on discovery of an emergency.

15.3.2 Risk assessments are a key part of any Emergency Planning. All risk assessments relating to collections will be carried out by appropriately trained staff. ELCMS curatorial staff will receive appropriate training in Managing Safely to facilitate ongoing risk management.

Appendix 1: Outline Policy for Working Historic Machinery

1.0 Introduction and background

The East Lothian Council Museums Service (ELCMS) collection includes a number of locomotives. The locomotive collection is supported by a group of volunteers, the Prestongrange Railway Society (PRS).

- 1.1 The Prestongrange Railway Society have volunteered with the ELCMS locomotive collections for over 20 years under a number of different organisational and management regimes. Steam locomotives have not operated on site at Prestongrange Museum since 2003. Since 2006 the PRS and ELCMS have been working on a project to bring one of the historic locomotives back into a condition where it can be operated on site at Prestongrange Museum.
- 1.2 ELCMS supports and facilitates the development of this project because demonstrating an object in use adds to our understanding of its purpose, significance and historic working conditions. It also increases access to the collections. Operating a locomotive also contributes to its preservation by, for example, the continued operation and lubrication of working parts.
- 1.4 The project to work towards operating a locomotive on site at Prestongrange will be developed responsibly and carefully taking into account relevant policies (Conservation and Collections Care, Documentation, Access and the Collections Development Policies), budgetary constraints, health and safety considerations, other resource implications and any implications for the Prestongrange site.
- 1.5 A key part of this project will be the development of a policy to govern the operation of the locomotive on site. This policy will be drawn up by ELCMS in consultation with PRS during 2013/2014 and will include (but not be limited to) the issues described in sections 2 to 5.
- 1.6 This policy will draw on '*Standards in the Museum Care of Large and Working Objects*' published by the former Museum & Galleries Commission (MGC) in 1994 and current best practice and will set out the main issues to be considered and the procedures that should be put in place before any historic object is operated.

2.0 Condition Survey

- 2.1 The locomotive being considered for operation is currently being restored at the Scottish Railway Preservation Society site at Bo'ness. A condition survey that adequately records the component parts and the detailed condition of the locomotive must be carried out in order to determine whether the object is in a condition which will allow operation once restoration is complete. This will be carried out by PRS and ELCMS.

3.0 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 The likely risks to the locomotive, to operators and visitors and site need to be considered, assessed, recorded and if possible mitigated prior to any operation. Specialist advice will be sought to assist with these risk assessments.
- 3.2 In relation to the locomotive wear and tear will be considered. This will include assessment of the likelihood of wear and tear or deterioration and if this is likely to take place to components that are designed to wear (e.g. bearings) and thus be considered acceptable. Where replacement of such components is deemed unacceptable it will be necessary to set limits for individual components

beyond which wear will not be allowed, i.e. the point at which operation will stop. This assessment will be carried out by PRS and ELCMS.

- 3.2.2 The assessment needs to determine whether it is possible to operate the locomotive to modern Health & Safety standards without compromising the integrity of the locomotive.

4.0 Conservation Plan & Operating Manual

- 4.1 An appropriate conservation and maintenance plan and operating manual will be drawn up both to monitor the locomotive's ongoing condition and to ensure its correct operation and maintenance. These plans and manuals will be completed prior to any operation. These will be completed by Prestongrange Railway Society and ELCMS.
- 4.2 A record must be kept of any work undertaken on the object (in line with sections 1.4, 2.1 and 3.2)

5.0 Training

- 5.1 The locomotive will only be operated if a sufficient number of trained and competent conservation and operating staff are available. A training regime will be developed and disseminated.

East Lothian Council Museums Service

Documentation Policy

Date of approval: June 2013

Date of review: June 2018

1.0 Overview

Collections are at the heart of all of the museums activities. The museum undertakes to record sufficient information about all objects for which it legally cares (including loans) and to ensure that that information is accurate, secure, reliable and accessible and objects can be identified and located.

1.1 Accurate documentation of the collection is a prerequisite for all other museum activity (as described in PAS197:2009, the Code of Practice for Cultural Collections Management) to

- enable access to the items in a collection,
- provide a method of audit for staff,
- maintain at least minimum professional standards in documentation procedures and collection information,
- demonstrate public accountability and evidence of ownership,
- enable interpretation of items and collections, particularly through associating objects and specimens with their histories,
- strengthen the security of the collections.

1.2 The East Lothian Council Museums Service (ELCMS) statement of purpose is: **“Preserving and presenting East Lothian’s cultural heritage.”**

Preserving includes collecting, documenting and conserving the physical and intellectual evidence of East Lothian’s cultural heritage as outlined in the Collections Development Policy.

Presenting covers all aspects of facilitating access to the collections to information about the collections and to the information contained within the collection items as outlined in this policy. It also includes the presentation of aspects of the cultural heritage which East Lothian shares in common with the wider community in Scotland, the UK and across the world, for example in the areas of art, history, science and the natural world.

2.0 Context (Standards, guidelines and legislation)

2.1 SPECTRUM: The UK Museum Documentation Standard is the nationally accepted standard for documentation. Manual and computerised documentation procedures for new objects entering ELCMS comply with the requirements of the MLA Accreditation scheme, and meet SPECTRUM standards.

All ongoing documentation (new and retrospective) will be carried out to meet SPECTRUM minimum standards, as outlined below and in the Documentation Manual:

- object entry
- acquisition
- accession register
- security copy of accession register
- location and movement control
- marking and/or labelling
- cataloguing
- object exit
- loans out
- loans in
- retrospective documentation

2.2 The overwhelming majority of the existing records meet basic standards. Over the period of the current Business Plan ELCMS will continue to bring existing documentation up to a higher standard, for example incorporating the more detailed SCRAN record information into the main database.

2.3 We will work to the following legislation, guidelines and standards:

- Data Protection (1998)
- Freedom of Information (2000)
- Current version of the Museums Association Code of Ethics
- Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011

2.4 The Documentation Manual describes how this policy is put into action. It is a working document, and will be revised and updated as required to meet best practice guidelines.

3.0 Access to collections

Good documentation, as described in section 2, is essential to enabling access to the museum collections. We will ensure that everyone can access the ELCMS collections by:

- working to clear the documentation backlog (described in the Documentation Plan, see section 4),
- working towards open days at the museum store over the period of the current Business Plan,
- facilitating access to the museum store by appointment,
- promoting and encouraging access to the collections through www.eastlothian.gov.uk/museums and www.johngraycentre.org,
- regularly checking our collections information (in the course of normal working or annually) to ensure it remains accessible and readable (see also section 5).

4.0 Documentation Plan

ELCMS has produced a Documentation Plan detailing the current state of the collections documentation and outlining a plan to deal with the backlog, assuming current staffing levels. This plan will be incorporated into the forward planning process.

The progress of the Documentation Plan will be monitored, and the plan will be revised and updated on an annual basis.

5.0 Documentation Security

ELCMS is committed to ensuring the long term security and integrity of our collections information (on paper and computerised). To do this we will:

- have a copy or backup of key paper records (such as the Accession Register) in case of theft, fraud or emergency situation. These copies or back-ups will be checked annually,
- ensure that the computerised database is maintained on the ELC Corporate network,
- provide information to staff and volunteers about the importance of information security and integrity,
- maintain version control of the computerised database,
- review the software being used for the computerised database during the period of the current Business Plan,
- keep up to date on documentation standards and software through professional networks such as Collections Link to avoid using obsolete software.

6.0 Documentation training and standards

6.1 All ELCMS volunteers and staff who work with collections will receive training and updates at induction and at regular intervals (annually) in relation to completing collections documentation. This training will include:

- general information about the importance of accurate and full completion of relevant forms,
- specific information about the parts of the documentation process in which they will potentially be involved,
- communication and discussion of the Documentation Manual,
- communication and discussion of the Documentation Plan.

6.2 All partner community museums receive training and updates about documentation in relation to items lent, borrowed, offered for acquisition etc. This training and information is offered anyone who might come into contact with museum objects or potential museum objects and includes trustees, stewards etc.

This training will be reviewed during 2013 with the opening of the Coastal Communities Museum, located in North Berwick.

East Lothian Council Museums Service

Access Policy

Approval Date: June 2013

Review Date: June 2018

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1.0 **Statement of Purpose**

East Lothian Council Museum Service's Statement of Purpose is:

"Preserving and presenting East Lothian's cultural heritage."

Preserving includes collecting, documenting and conserving the physical and intellectual evidence of East Lothian's cultural heritage as outlined in the **Collections Policy**.

Presenting covers all aspects of facilitating access to the collections; to information about the collections; and to the information contained within the collections. It also includes the presentation of aspects of the cultural heritage which East Lothian shares in common with the wider community in Scotland, the UK and across the world, for example in the areas of art, history, science and the natural world.

Improving access is vital to achieving both aspects of this statement and this Access Policy will guide the ELCMS approach to providing access to the collections and associated information.

2.0 **Background and Guiding Principles**

- 2.1 ELCMS is committed to enabling access to our collections for education, research and enjoyment by all within the reasonable constraints of resources, conservation and security. However, regular users of ELCMS and those who benefit most from our services are only a proportion of the diverse population we would like to engage with, and by improving access overall, the benefits will reach both current visitors and potential visitors.
- 2.2 We believe that all people have the fundamental right to enjoy the Museums' services, and we are committed to removing or reducing all the barriers that may prevent this. ELCMS places the communities it serves at the centre of its work, therefore, improving access for all these communities must be seen as essential, not as merely desirable.
- 2.3 Access and inclusion can be improved by identifying the barriers which prevent participation and developing strategies to dismantle them. These barriers can be institutional, personal and social, perceptions and awareness and the environment (physical and sensory, intellectual through inadequate information, display and interpretation of collections, educational, cultural, attitudinal, geographical, class, gender or age)¹. These barriers may prevent some people from using the services of ELCMS. By dismantling these barriers ELCMS can become a source of enjoyment, learning and inspiration for many more people.

¹ Definition from Museums Galleries Scotland Learning and Access Framework

3.0 Context

This Access Strategy draws on a number of national and local frameworks, policies and procedures relating to access.

3.1 Statutory Framework and Quality Standards

- Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Disability Discrimination Act, 1995
- Freedom of Information Scotland Act (2002)
- Equality Act 2010

3.2 Relevant policies, practices and procedures

- MLA Access for All self-assessment
- Single Equality Scheme 2010-12
- East Lothian Council documents; Equal Opportunities Statement, Lifelong Learning Strategy, Community Learning & Development Strategy, Disability Equality Scheme (2006)
- Museum Accreditation Scheme guidelines
- Museums Libraries and Archives “Inspiring Learning for All” framework.
- Museums Galleries Scotland “Access for All” Guidelines
- Scottish Museums Council ‘A national learning and access strategy for museums and galleries in Scotland’
- ELC Cultural Services and Museums Service Business Plans
- ELCMS Guidance for working with Children in ELC Museums
- ELCMS Collections Development, Collections Care and Conservation and Documentation Policies
- ELCMS Volunteers Policy
- Relevant guidance on provision of accessible online services

4.0 Current Service Profile

The work of ELCMS currently consists of a number of venues and services.

4.1 Facilities:

- John Muir’s Birthplace
- Prestongrange Museum
- Dunbar Town House Museum and Gallery
- John Gray Centre Museum
- Museum Offices and Stores
- Partner community museums: Musselburgh Museum and the Coastal Communities Museum (opening summer 2013)

4.2 Core Services:

- Management
- Collections
- Exhibitions
- Online Services

- Promotion
- Partnerships and Projects
- Education and Outreach

5.0 Consultation

5.1 ELCMS understands that by developing our collections, exhibitions and other services to more accurately reflect the communities we serve, we will provide a more accessible and relevant service. To ensure that this happens we will continue to consult our local communities about various aspects of our services and their delivery. Consultation is undertaken in a number of ways such as surveys, discussion groups, meetings etc. We will focus more of this consultative effort into work with our potential and developing users (see section 6) over the period of the current Business Plan.

6.0 Current and Potential Users

6.1 At present, users of ELCMS come from a number of different backgrounds.² They are marked on the list below as either (C) current users, (P) potential users, or (D) developing users. In order to continue these relationships, or attract new users, it is essential to improve access for all.

- Pre-schools (D)
- Schools; Primary & Secondary (C)
- Colleges and Universities (D)
- Community Groups, including local history societies, women's institutes, church and social groups, older peoples groups, BME groups, art and adult education groups and healthy living groups (C)
- Families (C)
- Individuals (C)
- Recent Incomers to East Lothian (D)
- Tourists and Day trippers (C)
- Museum and Heritage Professionals (D)
- Volunteers (C)
- Business Community (P)
- Adult Learners (D)
- Youth groups (D)

7.0 Collections

7.1 We will work towards developing our collections to represent all sections of East Lothian's people: men, women and children; those of different ethnic or cultural backgrounds and religions; people of different sexual orientation; those with disabilities and able-bodied people; people from all areas of the county.

² According to ELCMS Visitor Survey, SPIs & Museum visitor figures

7.2 Access to the reserve collections is currently available by prior arrangement, and generally takes place in the dedicated workroom adjacent to the museums store in Haddington. Collections of material specifically acquired for handling are used to take elements of the collection out to the general public via exhibitions, activities and events. We will work towards Museums Store open days within the period of the 2013-2016 Business Plan.

7.3 Access to the reserve collections has been greatly enhanced by the website www.johngraycentre.org through which users can access the museum collections database (along with those of Archives, HER and Local History). We will continue to improve information on the central database which will (through uploads) improve the information available on this website. We will also continue to take and upload collections images to this site.

8.0 *Communication*

8.1 We will make display and publicity materials available in other languages if relevant (Braille, British Sign Language) with notice.

8.2 We will annually review the publicly available access information available about all our facilities to ensure currency and accuracy. This information will be made available in a number of formats, and through relevant media, as resources allow.

9.0 *Dissemination and Training*

9.1 We believe that a welcoming and helpful response on first experiencing the museums or their services is essential to promoting access. All museum staff and volunteers will receive training in a number of related areas, as available. The success of the policy depends on all staff members, therefore, all staff will be given copies of the policy and expected to assist in its implementation.

10.0 *Access Audits*

10.1 ELCMS will assess, identify and address access issues by means of internal checklists and internally completed access audits. These will be undertaken annually. We will also work with local advocacy groups on specific projects.

10.2 Access audits were completed prior to reviewing this policy. The findings are summarised below:

10.2.1 *Positive Points*

- Newly developed buildings such as John Muir's Birthplace and the John Gray Centre were fully physically accessible, while other venues were working towards this standard
- Good partnership working was carried out throughout the Service to promote access
- Financial barriers were low due to free entry, limited charging and low cost items for sale in cafe/shops
- Particular projects have improved access, such as the tour for the visually impaired at the John Gray Centre, and the building and site improvements at Prestongrange

- Outreach work ensured different communities and groups could access museum services, in particular school groups were well catered for

10.2.2 Points to Improve Upon

- More work is needed on making collections more accessible –in physical, intellectual and cultural terms. This extends beyond the reach of visitors, to staff and volunteers whose work can be hampered by inaccessible collections.
- With a larger number of staff and volunteers, there is a need to ensure everyone is aware of the importance of accessibility, and that everyone is included in training on issues of disability awareness, equality and inclusion
- Need for a deeper understanding of current audiences and potential audiences and to relate this to exhibitions, publicity and outreach activity
- Venues with an historic building which may impact on physical access need to have alternative methods of visitors viewing information contained within these
- There is currently no overall in house standard for written material, including exhibitions, websites, publicity material and general information

10.3 In addition to Access Audits new projects and policies also undergo an Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA). This is to ensure that the needs of staff and volunteers, as well as museum visitors, are taken into account. Whilst Access Audits are carried out annually, EQIAs are carried out on an as-required basis

11.0 Aims

The findings of these audits, alongside the mission statement, EQIAs, consultation exercises, surveys and wider context of policies and legislation, have been used to develop the following Access Aims for ELCMS.

- a) To provide wider access to ELCMS venues and services to audiences and potential audiences and to tackle barriers which prevent inclusion. These barriers may be physical, sensory, intellectual, cultural, financial, emotional/attitudinal, access to decision making and access to information.
- b) To make access integral to service delivery
- c) To actively engage with a range of users and potential users; and to develop collections, venues and services which take their interests into account and reflect the diversity of East Lothian
- d) To have marketing and publicity processes that identify and promote collections, venues and services to all users and potential users
- e) To be outward looking, proactive and responsive in networking and forming links and partnerships with other departments, organisations and agencies in order to improve access and wider participation

12.0 Objectives

ELCMS will achieve these aims by working towards the following objectives:

1. We will ensure entry to ELCMS venues remains free to all. Costs for additional services such as events or activities which incur a charge will be kept in line with other local services and reviewed on an annual basis.
2. We will ensure information and training is provided to allow ELCMS staff and volunteers to understand the importance of accessibility for all and implement it in their working wherever possible.
3. We will work with both users, potential users, developing users and non-users of ELCMS to enable us to capture and understand their views, using both quantitative and qualitative data, to improve our services. We will also engage with visitors to our venues through an established feedback system.
4. We will aim to provide relevant equipment or adjustments to our venues or services, where possible, to enable better access for all users.
5. We will develop our exhibitions with the aim of providing a range of methods of accessing information, including sound, touch and vision. We will make text in the museums and on all printed information as clear and understandable as possible.
6. We will stage and contribute to temporary displays (often initiated by community groups) in venues around East Lothian to give access to the collections to those who do not or cannot visit the museums.
7. Where there are restrictions on access to our collections, services or venues due to factors outside our control, we will endeavour to provide methods of alternative access.
8. We will run events, workshops, reminiscence sessions and education activities to offer opportunities to as broad an audience as possible.
9. We will liaise with relevant groups and organisations to engage with all members of the community, particularly focussing on schools and community groups. This will include external agencies and organisations such as East Lothian Diversity Network, local schools and Community Learning and Development.
10. We recognise that East Lothian contains individuals and groups who, through a combination of factors including unemployment and low incomes, may face social exclusion. We will establish outreach work to engage with these communities throughout East Lothian, and ensure that our work reaches those at the risk of social exclusion.
11. We recognise that East Lothian's population is growing and that museums and cultural heritage can make a contribution to the understanding of, and involvement

in, local communities by recent settlers. We will work with recent settlers to enable our venues and services to reflect their identities and cater for their interests.

12. We will work towards developing our collections, services and venues to represent a wide range of the people, places and cultures of East Lothian.
13. We will ensure that, when required, alternative formats of ELCMS publications or information can be made available. Our venues and services will begin to include alternative ways of understanding information as part of their ongoing development.
14. We will continue to make information about the collections available in a variety of ways including online.
15. We will abide by all relevant national and local policies, as well as legal requirements, and will seek guidelines and advice from relevant organisations on how to integrate these into our collections, services and venues.
16. We will carry out annual Access Audits on our collections, services and venues and will react to the findings of these audits
17. The Museums Service will produce an Access Strategy by June 2014 outlining how the barriers to access will be addressed and how the ambitions for the service will be achieved. The strategy will take into account the constraints of staff and budgetary resources. It will be produced in consultation with partners and stakeholders within and outwith East Lothian Council, including other relevant institutions and community groups.
18. These objectives will be articulated in an Action Plan which will be updated annually