

Members' Library Service Request Form

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Authorised By	Caroline Rodgers
Designation	Head of Communities & Partnerships
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REPORT TO: Members' Library Service

MEETING DATE: March 2025

BY: Head of Communities and Partnerships

SUBJECT: Museums Service Collections Management Framework Policies

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To advise members about the updates and revisions to following East Lothian Council Museums Service Policies as required to ensure proper management of the East Lothian Council Museum Collection and to meet the requirements of the Museums Accreditation Scheme:

- Collections Development Policy
- Collections Care and Conservation Policy
- Collections Information (documentation) Policy (renamed Documentation Policy)
- Access Policy (including Collections 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, Dunbar Town House Museum and Gallery, and John Muir's Birthplace on behalf of John Muir's Birthplace Charitable Trust. The Service supports Musselburgh Museum and Heritage Group to operate Musselburgh Museum and the Coastal Communities Museum Trust to operate the Coastal Communities Museum. Dunbar and District History Society supports the Museums Service in the operation of Dunbar Town House Museum and Gallery and

operates an exhibition room and search room in that facility. The museum collection is held in Haddington in an environmentally controlled store.

- 3.2 The East Lothian Council museum collection contains close to 14,000 objects that are used in exhibitions, displays, activities, events, and projects to interpret the history of the region. The four policies that have been updated describe what East Lothian Council collects and why, how we care for the items we collect, how we organise and manage information about the collection, and how we make the collections and facilities accessible.
- 3.3 Prestongrange Museum, Dunbar Town House Museum and Gallery, John Gray Centre Museum, and John Muir's Birthplace are all accredited museums under the Museum Accreditation Scheme. This quality standards scheme is the UK standard for museums and galleries. It defines good practice and identifies agreed standards thereby encouraging development. It is a key criteria of this scheme that we have current versions of these policies.
- 3.4 The Collections Development, Collections Care and Conservation and Collections Information policies were originally approved by East Lothian Council in February 2019 and the Access Policy in was approved in June 2013.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no policy implications.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The subject of this report has been through the Integrated Impact Assessment process and no negative impacts have been identified.
- 5.2 Link to Integrated Impact Assessment:
https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/35118/museums_service_collections_management_framework_policies_ia
- 5.3 Link to Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment:
https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/35119/museums_service_collections_management_framework_-_childrens_rights_and_wellbeing_ia
- 5.4 Link to Child Friendly version of the Access Policy:
https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/35098/museum_access_-_child_friendly

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 None.

Appendices:

Collections Development Policy 2025 - 2030

Collections Care and Conservation Policy 2025 - 2030

Collections Information (Documentation) Policy 2025 - 2030

Access Policy (including Collections Access Policy) 2025 - 2030

AUTHOR'S NAME	Kate Maynard
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DATE	09/03/25

Name of museum: East Lothian Council Museums Service (ELCMS)

Name of governing body: East Lothian Council

Date of previous review: February 2024

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: February 2025

Policy review procedure: The collections development policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years.

Date at which this policy is due for review: February 2030

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 collections.

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1. Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation:

- 1.1. The museum'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 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.

- 1.2. The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.
- 1.3. By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.
- 1.4. Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.
- 1.5. The museum recognises its responsibility, when acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard. This includes using SPECTRUM primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage, and care of collection arrangements.
- 1.6. The museum will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift or bequest, 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.
- 1.7. The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.

2. History of the collections

ELCMS is defined as the following premises 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)

- Paintings and other works of art, normally held in other Council premises, are generally recognised as being the responsibility of the Museums Service from an audit and advice perspective.

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)
- Museum and Research Room in Dunbar Town House (operated by Dunbar and District History Society)

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.

Collecting prior to the establishment of ELCMS in 1990 was on a passive basis in all subject areas. This resulted in patchy collections with many gaps to be filled. The existence of a museum at North Berwick since 1957 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 3. Since March 1997 the majority of the Collection has been housed in a purpose-built store at Library and Museums Headquarters, Dunbar Road, Haddington.

3. An overview of current collections

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

The collection also includes:

- i. Natural History including Geology and Palaeontology
- ii. Archaeology
- iii. Numismatics
- iv. Visual Art
- v. Applied Art
- vi. Site Specific Collections
- vii. Oral History Collections

3.1 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.

3.2 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.

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.

3.3 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.

3.4 Seaside Holidays

Existing collections include many photographs and postcards, souvenirs, ephemera and documents, camping, picnic and beach equipment and costume. 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.

Future collecting will focus on improving the scope and geographical distribution of the East Lothian holdings and will also include items representing the newer tourist attractions in the region. Material representing seaside holidays outside East Lothian (as noted above) will no longer actively be collected. This area of the collection is closed.

3.5 Natural History including Geology and Palaeontology

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 although some specimens need conservation.

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 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 but there are no plans to develop a collection of animals that are preserved in spirit, i.e., a wet collection, due to lack of appropriate storage facilities. See section 11.

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 related to changes in rock formation, and extractive industries, etc. See section 11.

3.6 Archaeology

There is a growing collection of archaeological material generated mostly from the increase in building homes in East Lothian in recent years. The archaeology collection amounts to the second largest collection subject area. There is also a growing amount of human historic material, a small amount of which is unprovenanced and the rest from local sites such as Tantallon Castle and Archerfield medieval village. 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.

Several objects have been acquired through Treasure Trove, including a Bronze Age beaker, Iron Age horse harnesses, Bronze Age Axeheads, Roman brooches, and a number of stone anchors via the Receiver of Wreck.

Future collecting will be in accordance with all relevant legislation, regulations, and procedures. See sections 10 & 12.

3.7 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 from archaeological excavations will be accepted alongside other excavated material (see section above and section 12).

3.8 Visual Arts

There is a miscellaneous collection of works of art on paper and canvas. The main strength lies in local history and topography.

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.

3.9 Applied Arts

The collection contains a mixture of ceramics, glass, furniture, and textiles of local and non-local origin. Belfield and Makmerry pottery are 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, 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.

3.10 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 artefacts relating to the following places, their uses, users, and occupants:

- John Muir's boyhood homes in Dunbar, the Dunbar of his childhood & items that illustrate his legacy and impact,
- 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.

3.11 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 Service.

4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

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 3.

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.

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

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.

5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

5.1 The museum recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections are included and excluded from the review. The outcome of review and any subsequent rationalisation will not reduce the quality or significance of the collection and will result in a more useable, well managed collection.

5.2 The procedures used will meet professional standards. The process will be documented, open and transparent. There will be clear communication with key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process.

5.3 Responsible, curatorially-motivated and ethical transfer, disposal, reuse, and deaccessioning are necessary parts of a sustainable collections management approach.

Items considered for disposal should be assessed under the following categories: Significance (to the Collections Policy), Risk (whether hazardous), Condition, Completeness, Display potential, Engagement potential and Resource value. If the item meets none of the categories except risk, it can be considered for disposal.

5.4 Priorities for rationalisation and disposal during the period 2024-2029:

The first step is to undertake a desk-based assessment to decide on priorities for disposal and rationalisation as this will enable ELCMS to develop a well-informed and contextual view of each area of the Collection before decisions on disposals are made. This assessment will include information held in the collections database and in any relevant surveys or studies. The first areas to be assessed will be the social history and archaeology collections and collections related to Prestongrange Museum. Assessments will include legal considerations regarding ownership where unclaimed items (Loans In or enquiries), or items of unknown provenance, are concerned.

Once priorities for rationalisation and disposal have been identified using the categories in 5.3 the procedure described in clause 16 will be followed.

6. Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items

6.1 The museum recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museum Association Code of Ethics when considering acquisition and disposal.

7. Collecting policies of other museums

7.1 The museum 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.

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

- National Mining Museum of Scotland
- National Museums Scotland, including National Museum of Flight
- Scottish Railway Preservation Society
- Myreton Motor Museum
- Scottish Borders Council Museum Service
- City of Edinburgh Council Museums Service
- East Lothian Council Archive and Local History Services

The ELCMS works in partnership with the following organisations:

- i) Musselburgh Museum and Heritage Group who operate Musselburgh Museum under contract to East Lothian Council
- ii) Dunbar and District History Society who operate two rooms in Dunbar Town House under contract to East Lothian Council.
- iii) ELCMS operates John Muir's Birthplace Museum under a Management Agreement with the John Muir's Birthplace Charitable Trust.
- iv) Coastal Communities Museum Trust who operate the Coastal Communities Museum under contract to East Lothian Council.

In all of these relationships ELCMS works closely with trustees and volunteers regarding any objects that are offered to the ELC Museum Collections at any of these venues. 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 and relevant elements of the Collections Information (Documentation) Policy and Procedures.

8. Archival holdings

As ELCMS holds archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, East Lothian Council will be guided by Archive Accreditation Standards <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/archive-service-accreditation/>

9. Acquisition

The Team Manager - Museums is defined as being the professional officer responsible to the Council through the Head of Communities and Partnerships for the operation of the Museums Service according to proper professional standards. The Team Manager - Museums 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.

9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:

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 Team Manager- Museums 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.

9.2 The museum 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).

9.3 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, the museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The governing body 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.

10. Human remains

10.1 As the museum 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.

11. Biological and geological material

11.1 So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the museum 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.

12. Archaeological material

12.1 The museum will not acquire archaeological material (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.

12.2 In Scotland, under the laws of bona vacantia including Treasure Trove, the Crown has title to all ownerless objects including antiquities, although such material as human remains and environmental samples are not covered by the law of bona vacantia. Scottish material of chance finds and excavation assemblages are offered to museums through the treasure trove process and cannot therefore be legally acquired by means other than by allocation to ELCMS by the Crown. However, where the Crown has chosen to forego its title to a portable antiquity or an excavation assemblage, a Curator or other responsible person acting on behalf of the East Lothian Council, 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.

13. Exceptions

13.1 Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the museum is:

- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
- acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin

In these cases, the museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority. The museum will document when these exceptions occur.

14. Spoliation

14.1 The museum 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.

15. The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

- 15.1 The museum's governing body, acting on the advice of the museum's professional staff, if any, may take a decision to return human remains (unless covered by the '*Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Scottish Museums*' issued by MGS in 2011), objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. 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 16.1-5 will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.
- 15.2 The disposal of human remains from museums in Scotland will follow the guidelines in the 'Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Scottish Museums' issued by Museums Galleries Scotland in 2011.

16. Disposal procedures

- 16.1 All disposals will be undertaken transparently and with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on Disposal and Museum Association guidelines.
- 16.2 The governing body will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item with exceptions see 16.14. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be considered.
- 16.3 When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the museum 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.
- 16.4 When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift or transfer, sale or as a last resort - destruction.

- 16.5 The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the governing body only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including 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. 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.
- 16.6 A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, sale 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 the governing body of the museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator or manager of the collection acting alone.
- 16.7 Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain. 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.
- 16.8 If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museum to which it was offered 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 a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).
- 16.9 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, the museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.
- 16.10 Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections 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.
- 16.11 The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.
- 16.12 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 deaccession and disposal.

Disposal by exchange

- 16.13 The nature of disposal by exchange means that the museum will not necessarily be in a position to exchange the material with another Accredited museum. The governing body will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.
- 16.13.1 In cases where the governing body wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or non-Accredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 16.1-5 will apply.
- 16.13.2 If the exchange is proposed to be made with a specific Accredited museum, other Accredited museums which collect in the same or related areas will be directly notified of the proposal and their comments will be requested.
- 16.13.3 If the exchange is proposed with a non-Accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the museum will place a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, or make an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).
- 16.13.4 Both the notification and announcement must provide information on the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved both in the museum's collection and those intended to be acquired in exchange. A period of at least two months must be allowed for comments to be received. At the end of this period, the governing body must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.

Disposal by destruction

- 16.14 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.
- 16.15 It is acceptable to destroy material of low intrinsic significance (duplicate mass-produced articles or common specimens which lack significant provenance) where no alternative method of disposal can be found.
- 16.16 Destruction is also an acceptable method of disposal in cases where an object is in an extremely poor condition, has severely deteriorated and can never be displayed or used for research, and/or has high associated health and safety risks or is part of an approved destructive testing request identified in an organisation's research policy.
- 16.17 Where necessary, specialist advice will be sought to establish the appropriate method of destruction. Health and safety risk assessments will be carried out by trained staff where required.
- 16.18 The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, e.g., the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.

East Lothian Council Museums Service

Collections Care and Conservation Policy

Approval date: February 2025

Review date: February 2030

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. 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 Action and Improvement 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
Appendix 1: Collections care and conservation procedure
Appendix 2: Guiding Principles for the Operation of Historic Working Machinery

3.0 Planning

- 3.1 Collections care is a key part of the work of the Museums Service. Each Action and Improvement Plan and Collections Care 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 Management Framework. All relevant staff (paid and volunteer) have read and agree to abide by the policy. The policy should be read in conjunction with the current Action and Improvement Plan, Emergency Manual and Plan, Collections Management Framework 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 current and subsequent service Action and Improvement Plan (current plan covers 2024-7) 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 regularly.
- 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

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 *Benchmarks in Collection Care 2.1 for Museums, Archives and Libraries: A self-assessment*

checklist (<https://collectionstrust.org.uk/resource/benchmarks-in-collections-care-2-0/>) into the collections care planning process.

The Collections Officer is responsible for setting and ensuring that the standards of collections care are maintained.

- 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
 - Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Scottish Museums issued by MGS in 2011
 - PAS197: 2009 Code of Practice for Cultural Collections Management
 - Relevant factsheets, resources and guidelines from Collections Trust especially:
 - Collections Management: A Practical Guide published by Collections Trust
 - Guidelines for the Care of Larger and Working Historic Objects published by Collections Trust
 - Pest Management: A Practical Guide published by Collections Trust

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/volunteers 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 their Conservation Register. The 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 Service Action and Improvement Plan, any aims and objectives of relevant projects and any other relevant plans, policies or strategies.

6.4 The Team Manager - Museums has delegated responsibility (from ELC) to authorise conservation of items in the ELCMS Collection as the need arises.

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 and any conservation work performed is noted in the collections database.

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. The photograph collection is stored in the purpose built document and photograph store at the John Gray Centre in Haddington.

7.2 The museum store has undergone a number of improvements in recent years including new racking for different categories of object such as natural history and framed works of art. Any alterations during the period of the current Action and Improvement Plan will focus on using the available space to its greatest potential and will be subject to the usual budgetary constraints unless grant aid is available.

7.3 Previously a small proportion of the Collection was housed in less suitable conditions at Prestongrange Museum and at Musselburgh Museum. Over the period of the last Action and Improvement plan items stored in Musselburgh

Museum have been rehoused at HQ in the main store. Some collections items at Prestongrange Museum were rehoused in a specially built storage and display shed and the locations of others will be reviewed as part of ongoing site improvement work.

- 7.4 A plan of the museum store is appended to the Conservation and Collections Care Plan.
- 7.5 Objects will be stored using materials appropriate to their composition and condition and these standards will be maintained and checked by the Collections Officer. A list of acceptable storage materials is contained in the Conservation and Collections Care Plan.

8.0 Audit and condition checking

- 8.1 Over the course of the last planning period a formal audit of the collection was performed for insurance valuation purposes. This allowed for many item locations to be checked and updated. In addition, a shelf inventory was begun which also allowed for updating of object information and locations. Documentation is kept up to date and regular checks on object locations are carried out using the computerised database in response to research enquiries and exhibition needs. Searches are initiated using old documentation systems for any items that cannot be located. Wrongly or inadequately documented objects are updated as they are encountered. Future revaluations will be used to undertake audits of discreet sections of the collection such as numismatics.
- 8.2 Condition checking is undertaken on groups or individual objects to assess storage conditions and was also performed during the valuation exercise. 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 uses Gemini 'Tinytag' data loggers in the museums and store and data is monitored biannually. The Museums Service has upgraded all display areas to have data loggers.

- 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. The National Museums Scotland has a facility to freeze a bulk collection of incoming material prior to accessioning to eradicate pests and this will be done as resources allow and the facility remains available.
- 10.3 Display and storage areas are monitored for the presence of insects and rodents, and traps are regularly checked. Trapped insects are identified if they are found. Front of house staff are briefed annually on museums pests and signs of infestation to look out for in display areas.

11.0 Sustainability

- 11.1 ELCMS is committed to using sustainable working practices across all aspects of our work including collections care and conservation as noted in Section 4e of the Service Action and Improvement Plan.

12.0 Working machinery

- 12.1 Guiding principles for the operation of historic working machinery are included as an appendix to this policy. As and when required the ELCMS will draw up a separate policy for the care and operation of historic working items (largely the locomotive collection) in consultation with a volunteer partner group, the Prestongrange Railway Society.

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 and pest management 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.

14 Access to collections (see also the ELCMS Access Policy & Procedures which includes a detailed section in relation to 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 will be supervised at all times.

14.2 Handling Collection

The Handling Collection is stored in Haddington. Use of the Handling Collection by schools and community groups 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 Collections 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. Any items containing hazardous materials are also included in the plan.

15.2 Security

Expert assessment of security arrangements for all venues and stores was reviewed in 2023. The recommendations will be reviewed and if accepted they will be implemented over the period of the next Action and Improvement Plan. 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 2028.

15.2.2 Advice will be sought in the first instance from Lothian and Borders Police. 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 sit under a service wide Emergency Plan. The ELCMS Emergency Plan and Manuals are informed by the East Lothian Council Corporate Business Continuity Plan. The Emergency Manuals include:

- the arrangements for staff and visitors,
- the arrangements for collections and buildings including salvage arrangements,
- 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 to facilitate ongoing risk management.

Appendix 1. Collections Care and Conservation Procedures

This procedure details the steps to follow when managing and carrying out conservation of objects.

1. Object selection

Objects are only selected for treatment in consultation with all relevant parties including the Team Manager- Museums, the Exhibitions Officer, and the Collections Officer. Criteria will include object condition as well as display need.

2. Agreeing conservation work

The scope of the work to be carried out is agreed with a conservator and detailed in writing. The conservator is provided with the object's accession number and a brief description; any previous conservation history; recommended treatment or conservation requirements resulting from previous condition assessments and intended use; the reason for conservation; completion date; any health and safety hazards and risk assessments.

The conservator will provide a written report to include an assessment and recommendations following a condition check; a timetable of work; the conservator's name and business details; the authority to carry out the work and the person responsible; terms and conditions (e.g. payment schedule); any transport, handling, security, insurance and access arrangements, both in transit and while the objects are with the conservator.

If a conservator has previously carried out assessments and made recommendations for treatment, this can form the basis of reaching agreement on the work to be done. If this is not the case, a condition check and recommendations for treatment will be carried out by the conservator on first receiving objects.

3. Record information about the conservation work before it is carried out.

This should include the following: object accession number; a reference number for the work; the name of the conservator and contact details; conservation authorisation date; conservation method (using a standard term source) being used in the work.

4. Carrying out the conservation work

Move the objects and record the new location in the collections database with the date of movement. The conservator is to carry out the agreed conservation work.

5. Recording conservation work.

At the time, or as soon as possible, record details of the job and the work on each object. While the work is being carried out, or very soon afterwards, the conservator should record object conservation and treatment information; when the work was carried out; treatment start and end dates. The conservator should write a treatment report containing: the type of work (e.g. conservation treatment, preventive measures, condition report, loan condition report), the action carried out (location, procedure, method, materials used, duration, and result), reference numbers of reports, photographs, drawings, X-radiographs or other types of image, new or revised handling, packing, storage and display recommendations, the packing/support instructions if part of the work, the updates to the care and maintenance plan (if appropriate), the call back date for any follow-up work or evaluation (if appropriate) (Recall date), and details of any new or reproduction parts fitted to an object.

All relevant information from the conservation record should be added to the collections database. File a copy of all the information recorded during the work and note the Document location in the relevant object records so it can find it in future.

Key information (such as hazard notes or handling recommendations) should be added to the relevant object records so it is immediately available to anyone looking at those records.

6. Recall dates.

Check the objects on the agreed recall dates. To check the longer-term success of conservation treatment, objects should be examined on agreed recall dates and their condition recorded.

Appendix 2: Guiding Principles for the Operation of Historic Working 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).

The Prestongrange Railway Society have volunteered with the ELCMS locomotive collections for over 40 years under a number of different organisational and management regimes. Steam locomotives have not operated on site at Prestongrange Museum since 2003.

2.0 Context

Locomotive No6, which is an 0-4-0 saddle tank by Andrew Barclay built in 1937, is on operational loan to the Museum of Scottish Railways at Bo'ness. Members of the PRS support this loan and the operation of the locomotive. The loan is managed by a formal loan agreement with the SRPS.

ELCMS support and facilitation of the loan to SRPS is based on acceptance of the principle that 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.

3.0 Guiding Principles for the Operation of Historic Working Machinery

3.1 None of the ELCMS owned locomotives or rolling stock are currently operational other than Locomotive No6 (see 2.0 Context). Any operation of historic working machinery will be done responsibly and carefully with detailed planning and due consideration of 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 and buildings.

1.5 Prior to the operation of any historic machinery at any ELCMS site we would require a suitable policy, safety management system and detailed procedures. Specifically in relation to locomotive collections these documents should include (but not be limited to) the issues described in sections 2 to 5.

1.6 Any future policy would draw on Guidelines for the Care of Larger and Working Historic Objects published by Collections Trust 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 Prior to operation a condition survey that adequately records the component parts and the detailed condition of the machinery must be carried out in order to determine whether the object is in a condition which will allow operation once restoration is complete. In the case of locomotives this will be carried out following discussion and agreement between PRS and ELCMS with professional support where required.
- 2.2 Wear and tear should be assessed prior to operation. 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.

3.0 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 The likely risks to the locomotive, to operators and visitors and site have to be considered, assessed, recorded and if possible mitigated prior to any operation. Specialist advice must be sought to assist with these risk assessments.
- 3.2 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 ongoing condition of any machinery being operated and to ensure its correct operation and maintenance. These plans and manuals will be completed prior to any operation.
- 4.2 A record must be kept of any work undertaken on the object.

5.0 Training

- 5.1 Machinery will only be operated if a sufficient number of trained and competent conservation and operating staff are available.
- 5.2 A training regime will be developed, disseminated and kept up to date amongst relevant parties.

East Lothian Council Museums Service

Collections Information (Documentation) Policy

Date of approval: February 2025

Date of review: February 2030

1.0 Purpose and Introduction

Collections are at the heart of all the museums activities. ELCMS 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. The aim of this policy is to ensure that we fulfil our guardianship, stewardship and access responsibilities.

Through implementation of this policy our objectives are to:

- enable access to the items in the collection,
- provide a method for staff to audit the collection,
- attain the highest professional standards wherever possible 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,
- extend access to collection information.

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 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: Context (Standards, guidelines and legislation)

Section 4: Levels of Documentation

Section 5: Access to Collections Information

Section 6: Documentation Security

Section 7: Documentation training and standards

3. Context (Standards, guidelines and legislation)

- 3.1 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 Accreditation scheme and meet SPECTRUM standards.

All documentation (new and retrospective) will be carried out to meet current SPECTRUM minimum standards and will include the following procedures which are detailed in the Collections Information (documentation) Manual:

- object entry
- acquisition and accessioning
- location and movement control
- inventory
- cataloguing
- object exit
- loans in (borrowing objects)
- loans out (lending objects)
- documentation planning

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

- Data Protection (GDPR) (2018)
- Freedom of Information (2000)
- Current version of the Museums Association Code of Ethics
- Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011
- Relevant publications from Collections Trust

- 3.3 This policy is part of the ELCMS Collections Management Framework:

- Collections Development Policy
- Access Policy (which includes the Collections Access Policy)
- Collections Care and Conservation Policy.

- 3.4 Collections Information (Documentation) Manual and Plan

ELCMS has produced a Collections Information (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.

The Collections Information (Documentation) Procedures Manual describes how this policy is put into action. It is a working document and will be revised and updated as required by relevant ELCMS staff to meet best practice guidelines. It also describes the history of the documentation of the collections.

Where collections information is generated or acquired which relates to other SPECTRUM procedures other than those listed in section 3.1 this information will be recorded and retained appropriately. For example, valuations for insurance purposes have been carried out for specific parts of the collection such as fine art, and a whole collection valuation performed in 2024. The values will be documented in the collections management system once finalised.

4.0 Levels of documentation

The overwhelming majority of the existing records meet basic standards with objects documented to individual item level. For certain collections, for example bulk archaeological excavation material, it is neither feasible nor practical to document the material to individual item level, and we will document items at group level. We therefore aim to have a basic 'inventory' record for all identified items and groups within the collection whilst some items will be documented to a more detailed 'catalogue' level. Inventory and Catalogue level documentation is described below:

- **Inventory level:** This includes sufficient key information to allow any object(s) in our care to be individually identified and verified. All accessioned items, loans inward and outward, and any other un-accessioned objects as appropriate are documented at this level.
- **Catalogue level:** We will identify the collections/objects that merit further, more detailed, documentation, thus raising the standard of information to catalogue level. Such documentation will include the known history of an artifact, an image of the object and references to any relevant publication etc

5.0 Access to Collections Information

Good documentation is essential to enabling access to the museum collections. A detailed description of our users, non-users, audiences and approach to ensuring access to collections and collections information is given in the Access Policy.

We will ensure that everyone can access the ELCMS collections by:

- working to clear the documentation backlog (described in the Collections Information (documentation) Plan),
- regularly checking our collections information (in the course of normal working or annually) to ensure it remains accessible and readable.
- Remaining informed of technological advances to avoid the current CMS becoming obsolete and ensure the long-term accessibility of the information held.

6.0 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 digital copy or backup of key paper records (such as the Accession Register) in case of theft, fraud, or emergency. These copies or back-ups will be checked annually and stored on the ELC corporate network,
- ensure that all paper documentation is kept securely (for example in locked filing cabinets),
- ensure that the collections management system 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,
- keep up to date on documentation standards and software through professional networks such as Collections Trust to avoid using obsolete software,
- All requests for information will be considered in terms of compliance with the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and Data Protection Act (2018) and Environmental Information Regulations (2004). We will review requests for confidential data such as donor information, environmental information, valuations or site details on a case-by-case basis, and in accordance with the applicable legislation and any legal agreements or conditions of gift.

7.0 Documentation training and standards

- 7.1 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,
- training in the use of the collections management system,
- communication and discussion of the Collections Information (documentation) Manual,
- communication and discussion of the Collections Information (documentation) Plan.

7.2 All partner community museums including trustees and stewards receive regular training and updates about documentation in relation to items lent, borrowed, offered for acquisition etc.

East Lothian Council Museums Service

Access Policy (including Collections Access Policy)

Reviewed during 2024

Approval Date: March 2025

Review Date: March 2030

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1. Introduction - Purpose & Scope

The purpose of this policy is to set out the East Lothian Council Museums Service (ELCMS) commitment to maximising access to our collections and facilities, and to identify the ways in which we achieve this across the service.

This Access Policy relates to all collections held by ELCMS as well as our services, activities, facilities and programmes at our directly operated venues and online. A detailed description of the collections is included in the current Collections Development Policy.

This Access Policy informs our Service Action and Improvement Plan and Access Plan and is part of our Collections Management Framework.

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.

1.2 Background and Guiding Principles

ELCMS is committed to enabling access to our collections for learning and enjoyment by all within the reasonable constraints of budget, the law, planning, conservation and security. Everyone has the right to access and enjoy our collections, museums and services and we have a duty to make sure that our services and facilities are operated and managed in such a way that ensures that individuals or groups are treated fairly and without any form of discrimination.

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. By removing or reducing barriers where possible that may prevent people from accessing our facilities or services we can provide a more inclusive service. A wide range of barriers prevent participation in our services. This policy identifies our approach to developing strategies to dismantle, mitigate or remove these barriers.

Barriers to access can be institutional, personal and social, they can relate to perceptions & awareness as well as the environment. Barriers can be physical and sensory, educational, cultural, technological, attitudinal, geographical, intellectual (through inadequate or poorly presented information) or relate to methods of display and interpretation of collections. They can also relate to the needs of people with protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010 or a person or groups at socio-economic disadvantage.

2. Context

This Access Policy draws on several relevant national and local frameworks, policies and procedures, noted in Appendix A. The Public Sector Equality Duty sets the strategic context for this policy. The ELC website states: 'The East Lothian Council Equality Plan clearly states the Council's commitment to equality and diversity and to demonstrate how we are meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 to ensure our decision making and day-to-day activities consciously consider how we address equality and to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who don't
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

The Plan also contributes to the Council achieving its overarching commitment to reduce inequalities within and across our communities.’¹

3. Current Service Profile

ELCMS currently consists of several venues and services.

3.1 Venues:

- John Muir's Birthplace
- Prestongrange Museum
- Dunbar Town House Museum and Gallery
- John Gray Centre Museum
- Museum Offices and Stores

ELCMS also has 3 partner community organisations/museums: Musselburgh Museum, Coastal Communities Museum and Dunbar and District History Society.

3.2. Core Services and Functions:

The functions of the ELCMS are collections management, exhibitions development and programming, learning and access, outreach, visitor services, marketing and promotion, management, partnership support and development and facility and site management. The service delivers these functions using a range of mechanisms such as exhibitions, events, websites (www.johngraycentre.org and www.jmbt.org.uk), loan and reminiscence topic boxes, activities etc. on and off our sites to a varied and changing audience.

4.0 Audience

At present, users of ELCMS museums and services include people within the following groups: Schools; Nursery, Primary & Secondary and ASN classes; formal or informal learning and health/ wellbeing services or groups; community groups of all ages, families, individuals & groups, UK and international tourists and day visitors, volunteers, stakeholder groups and local businesses.

¹ [East Lothian Council Equality Plan](#) | [East Lothian Council Equality Plan](#) | [East Lothian Council](#)

The visitor profile for each venue is slightly different due to a number of variables such as location, community, transport links, museum content/theme etc. We would like to develop our audiences at all the museums and are prioritising widening our appeal and growing the number of school and other learning visitor groups of all ages, groups from wellbeing services or other community services and family groups.

5.0 Collections

We are committed to increasing public access to the collections and information, and to increasing knowledge and understanding of the collections and heritage sites.

We will work towards having a clear understanding of how representative our collections are of the current and past communities of the region. In consultation we will then develop strategies to address any gaps, hidden stories or under-representations.

We will continue to ensure that access is available to collections through a range of interpretation and outreach techniques to meet the needs of different audiences. This includes but is not limited to exhibitions, displays, loans, events, loan boxes, outreach sessions and handling sessions. More information is included in sections 7 and 9.

5.1 Access to reserve collections and collections information

To increase access to collections not on display we offer research facilities, web-based resources and access to staff. Access to the reserve collections is currently available by prior arrangement and more information is provided about this via www.eastlothian.gov.uk/museums and at www.johngraycentre.org/visit/opening-hours.

We have a code of practice and conditions for accessing collections and both are available at www.eastlothian.gov.uk/museums. Anyone accessing reserve collections is supervised by trained professional staff with consideration given to the condition of collections and any issues such as hazards, copyright, ethical matters etc. prior to access being granted.

Access to the reserve collections has been greatly enhanced by the website www.johngraycentre.org through which users can easily access information about our collections or holdings (along with those of Archives, Heritage/Archaeology and Local History). We will continue to improve information on the collections management database (Modes Complete) which will improve the information available on this website. We will aim to upload more collections images to this site. Collections information not yet available on this site will be made available to enquirers/researchers where possible (within the limitations of relevant legislation, confidentiality etc).

5.2 Use of Collections

Access to collections must always be balanced against the care, security and management requirements of collections.

To make the collections accessible to wider audiences we will respond to requests for loans from the collections to public exhibitions in other accredited museums, libraries and archives or appropriate institutions. The condition of items and their importance to our own displays and visitor access requirements will be considered before agreeing to lend, as will display, security and environmental conditions provided by the borrowing institution, risks and other relevant factors. Borrowers are expected to meet the costs associated with loans unless that loan is to a partner museum. Loans are generally subject to approval by the Team Manager, Museums who will seek advice from relevant colleagues within ELC as necessary including in relation to insurance/indemnity.

Information resulting from collections use such as loans or research will be added to the collections management system, for example as a reference to a publication, or link to a scanned document on the ELCMS shared drive. Any information that enhances the object's biography or relevance to the collection, or that may be analytical in nature will be retained.

To further access to collections from other institutions, we may borrow objects from them to enhance our public exhibitions. The condition of items and their importance to our own displays and visitor access requirements will be considered before requesting a loan, as will any display, security and environmental conditions specified by the borrowing institution, risks and other relevant factors.

We will record visitor numbers to our exhibitions. We provide visitor comment books and cards to gather anonymous feedback and review comments when reviewing our exhibitions. Comment books are retained as per guidance in the ELC retention schedule.

The loans in and loans out procedures are detailed in the Collections Information (documentation) Procedures Manual.

5.3 Photography, copying, rights and reproduction

Low resolution copies of images are used on our websites (www.johngraycentre.org, www.eastlothian.gov.uk and www.jmbt.org.uk). We also have a large number of images available to users of www.scran.ac.uk and www.artuk.org.

Charges and costs associated with purchasing copies of images for personal or commercial use are published on www.eastlothian.gov.uk as the 'Charges Book' and this is updated annually. Images can also be purchased from www.scran.ac.uk through their website.

Copy and reproduction requests are managed by the ELCMS Collections Officer with the support of the Team Manager Museums where required.

It is not possible to provide copies of images under copyright. Where we know the copyright holder and can provide their details to an enquirer we will do so.

Whilst every effort is made to establish the copyright holder for images this is not always possible, or this information is not available. Where we have been unable to establish a copyright holder we follow the 'Takedown Policy' published at <https://www.johngraycentre.org/historic-image-collection/copyrighttakedown/>.

5.4 Enquiries

ELCMS receives enquiries about our collections via a variety of means. These will be responded to according to ELC published timescales. An acknowledgement response will be sent to the enquirer as soon as possible (depending on staff availability). Should detailed research be required to answer the enquiry, this will be communicated to the enquirer and a timescale given within which they can expect to hear back.

For any requests to sample objects that would result in destructive testing, careful consideration will be taken as to the uniqueness of the object to be tested as well as the purpose and benefits of the sampling. Relevant professionals at other national institutions within the UK will be consulted and best practice guidelines applied. A loan agreement detailing the maximum amount of sample that can be taken from the object will be drawn up prior to any sampling. Any results generated will be added to the collections management system and will be publicly available via the website.

6.0 Communication, exhibitions, displays, promotion and marketing

The needs of visitors and service users are considered when preparing and presenting collections information and interpretation in the galleries, exhibitions and online. Consideration will be given to providing information and interpretation in a range of formats, for example labels, large print, in person tours or talks, audio tours, blogs, social media posts, film, interactives, BSL and audio and languages other than English, as resources allow.

We will periodically 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 print media, websites and social media sites, as resources allow.

All information and communications will follow good practice and agreed guidelines for text and style.

We will provide levels of information and interpretation to suit a range of audiences and abilities.

7. Consultation

ELCMS 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. This includes consultation with children and young people under the UNCRC.

We will regularly consult and evaluate our services with users and use this information to prioritise actions outlined in our Service Improvement Plan.

We will consult with non-users/less-engaged users to identify barriers to participation and feed the results of this into our planning. A list of the visitor studies and consultation methods and approaches used is appended to the current Service Action and Improvement Plan.

8. Community engagement and participation

ELCMS is committed to actively engaging with our diverse local communities. We will develop links to target audiences, especially through partnership and co-production with other organisations. We will 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.

ELCMS will maintain outreach options for those who are unable to visit the Museum, particularly the loan box schemes for audiences in schools and care homes.

ELCMS is committed to providing volunteer opportunities and seeks to recruit volunteers from diverse backgrounds.²

9. Learning and Programming

We will maintain a range of suitable handling materials drawn from the collections for different audiences and levels of ability.

We will provide learning programmes that are tailored to the needs and requirements of specific target groups and audiences.

Educational materials will be made available for different audiences and abilities including children and young people with additional needs, as required and as resources allow, with a key goal of reducing the attainment gap.

Educational programmes and exhibitions will be open to all and offered on site and online where possible.

² The recruitment and management of volunteers is guided by our Draft Volunteer Policy (draft under consultation February 2025).

10. Premises

Our venues will provide signage and navigation to suit a range of needs and will respond to requests made by the public regarding information required in alternative formats, as resources allow.

We are committed to providing equal access to our buildings and to making alternative provision where necessary within the constraints of historic buildings and resources. We actively publicise the levels of accessibility of our sites and facilities.

11. Customer care

All staff members are involved in implementing this policy, assisting and welcoming our customers.

We will work within the framework of the East Lothian Council Customer Strategy.

All users of our sites and services will be treated with equal respect within an inclusive atmosphere and welcomed according to their individual needs.

We provide visitor facilities to meet our customers' needs at the Museums including shops and a café. Where possible, the venues will provide baby changing facilities, access and parking for pushchairs, accessible toilets and seating for the comfort and ease of visitors. We will also retain useful and up to date information for visitors about other attractions or facilities in the local area such as Changing Places.

We are committed to providing a safe environment for all. We have procedures for the safe evacuation of all users and staff in an emergency. There are policies and procedures for Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults.

12. Financial

We are committed to maintaining free entry to our facilities and to ensuring that paid for activities are fairly and transparently priced with relevant and appropriate discounts offered where possible.

13. Dissemination and Training

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.

We aim to create a culture of open communication and fairness so will act to empower staff to highlight areas where they perceive inequality or discrimination to be.

As part of staff induction process, all staff receive equality and diversity online training.

14. Access Audits and Assessments

ELCMS will assess, identify and address access issues by means of internal checklists and internally completed access audits. We will also commission external access audits periodically and we will use these to inform and update this policy and plan and actions within the ELCMS Team Action and Improvement Plan.

ELCMS will use the ELC Integrated Impact Assessment tool and the Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment tool effectively so that protected characteristics and socio-economic disadvantage are taken into account when planning and designing services and when making policy decisions.

Appendix A

Statutory Framework

- Equality Act 2010
- The Fairer Scotland Duty
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), as supplemented by the Data Protection Act 2018
- Freedom of Information Act, 2000
- Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, as amended

Relevant Policies, Procedures and Best Practice Guidance

- East Lothian Council Equality Plan 2021-25
- East Lothian Council Plan 2017-2027
- Relevant current East Lothian Council internal policies and plans
- Most up to date Area Partnership Plans
- Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015
- East Lothian Partnership Poverty Plan (awaiting publication autumn 2024)
- Museum Accreditation Scheme guidelines
- Museums Galleries Scotland advice pages and relevant topics: [Advice Topics - Museums Galleries Scotland](#)
- ELC Customer Services and Museums Service Action and Improvement Plans
- ELCMS Collections Development, Collections Care and Conservation and Collections Information (Documentation Policies), Procedures, Plans and Manuals.
- ELCMS Volunteers Policy and supporting documents
- ELC BSL plan 2024-2030
- Current published version of SPECTRUM & Museums Association Code of Ethics