

Enabling close collaboration between partners



Client

Situated in the heart of Scotland, West Lothian is a thriving district with a population of around 150,000.

The Civic Centre partners include:

- ◆ West Lothian Council
- ◆ Scottish Courts Service
- ◆ Lothian and Borders Police
- ◆ Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service
- ◆ Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service
- ◆ West Lothian Community Health and Care Partnership
- ◆ Scottish Children's Reporter Administration Service

Goals

- ◆ Enable partners to share documents and project data easily
- ◆ Facilitate new collaborative working practices

Charteris' Role

- ◆ Design and implement a collaborative working solution based on Microsoft's SharePoint Server

Results

- ◆ A centralised system that all partners can use to share and manage project information
- ◆ An emerging new collaborative working culture

Public sector organisations in West Lothian are embarking on a new period of co-operation. In order to improve services and generate efficiencies, a new Civic Centre is being built to provide joint headquarters for the local council, courts, police and other organisations. However, before the partners can share an office facility, they first have to share responsibility for managing the build. Charteris implemented Microsoft's SharePoint Server solution to enable centralised document and project management and has paved the way for a new era of collaboration.

All large, public sector building projects are complicated, but this venture is possibly one of the most ambitious ever attempted. Seven different organisations are due to occupy the new civic facilities, and each partner has its own requirements that have to be taken into account.

During the build process, the Civic Centre partners have to be able to work closely together to specify their needs, discuss options, make decisions and track the progress of the project. As a result, the partners needed to be able to exchange information quickly and easily on a daily basis.

"It was absolutely daunting," says Roberto Riaviz, Technical Strategy Manager at West Lothian Council and ICT project manager for the Civic Centre project. "We had to facilitate the exchange of a diverse range of files across different systems with different levels of security – and achieve all of that efficiently."

West Lothian Council had heard of Microsoft's SharePoint Server solution and soon identified that this new collaboration tool could help it address the challenges.

A portal-based solution, SharePoint Server enables organisations to store and organise all their resources, contact files and reports centrally and make them available to users over the Internet. It reduces the need for documents to be emailed and prevents the confusion that can arise from the emergence of multiple versions of the same report.

Due to the complexity of the Civic Centre build and the number of partners involved, West Lothian Council recognised that it would need some assistance to set up SharePoint Server to meet the needs of the project. It spoke with Microsoft about its dilemma, and Microsoft recommended Charteris, a Gold Partner.

"Charteris has been working with Microsoft as a consulting partner for over seven years and provides a range of high-end technical and business consultancy services", says Nick Lennox, Services Programme Manager at Microsoft. "The Charteris consultants have strong skills and experience with Microsoft solutions and have designed and implemented numerous complex enterprise systems."





“Charteris has delivered a true enabling technology that is helping us to fulfil our vision of collaborative working.”

Roberto Riaviz,
Technical Strategy Manager,
West Lothian Council

Live in just three weeks

Charteris met with all the key stakeholders in the project and designed and built the solution to meet the requirements of all the partners. In particular, the firm incorporated features to ensure ease of use for all of the individuals involved in the Civic Centre build. The resulting solution provides features for document collaboration and version control, document approval workflows, management reporting, task tracking and project calendars.

“Charteris obviously has a close partnership with Microsoft and a lot of experience of Microsoft products,” says Riaviz. “We were surprised and absolutely delighted when the solution went live in just three weeks.”

He adds: “Without Charteris’ support, we would never have got up and running so quickly. Charteris helped us to avoid likely pitfalls and played a key role in bringing all the major stakeholders onside.”

The solution is used by a large number of different project teams and working groups to manage partners involved in the build and to track the progress of different project streams. Everyone can see the same, up-to-date information at the same time, and this makes risks easier to manage. More than 50 employees from different partner organisations use the solution daily, while many thousands of people can view information on it, as needed.

“The consultants from Charteris were approachable and knowledgeable and always delivered to any agreed timescale,” says Riaviz. “The firm has a very flexible approach and was able to adapt to meet our very complex and particular requirements.”

A new way of working

When the Civic Centre build is completed, all of the information and documents in SharePoint Server will continue to play an important role. “As this is such a large, publicly-funded project, the partners need to be able to provide audit trails for how and where the money was spent,” says Riaviz. “The SharePoint Server system will provide a complete, accurate and central record of the entire project.”

Now that Microsoft’s SharePoint solution has been proven in the Civic Centre project, West Lothian Council is examining ways to use it internally. The council has approximately 8,500 employees, and the opportunities for using SharePoint to improve collaboration between different teams and departments are numerous.

“We now have a very successful proof of concept for a collaborative working environment,” says Riaviz. “We expect to use this system as a template for making a range of processes much more economical.” For example, Riaviz plans to develop a new version of the solution that employees and partners can use to make and manage room bookings in the new Civic Centre.

SharePoint Server has encouraged a whole new way of working for West Lothian Council and for the other partners. “Charteris helped us all to think and work more collaboratively,” observes Riaviz. “In many respects, this project has led to a cultural shift, and this new way of working is something that we will want to continue in the council in the future.”

He concludes: “Charteris has delivered a true enabling technology that is helping us to fulfil our vision of collaborative working.”

www.charteris.com
email: info@charteris.com

Business specialists who speak IT
IT experts who think business



About Charteris

Charteris delivers greater customer focus and business efficiency through seamless business and IT consulting. Our unique blend of ‘business specialists who speak IT and IT experts who think business’ ensures that clients receive seamless solutions that deliver competitive edge.

Leading public and private sector organisations draw on our deep experience to help them improve performance and reduce costs. Our services include [Customer Centric Business Change](#), [Microsoft Dynamics](#) solutions and other advanced solutions based on the full spectrum of [Microsoft Technologies](#) and associated technologies.

Charteris plc, Charteris House,
39/40 Bartholomew Close, London EC1A 7JN
Tel: +44 (0)20 7600 9199
Fax: +44 (0)20 7600 9212

CHARTERIS

Seamless business and IT for performance advantage

© Charteris plc 2010