From Fragmented to Protected: How a Major Local Authority Transformed Its Cyber Resilience

INDUSTRY
Government

HEADQUARTERS
Livingston, United Kingdom

OVERVIEW

West Lothian Council is one of Scotland's largest unitary local authorities, serving around 185,000 residents across the West Lothian area. Responsible for a wide range of essential public services, including education, social care, housing, roads, and environmental services, the council operates with an annual budget exceeding £636 million and employs thousands of staff across more than 150 locations.

OUR SOLUTION

Hybrid Mesh Network Security

Workspace Security

Check Point Services

CHALLENGE

West Lothian Council is one of Scotland's largest local authorities, delivering a wide range of critical public services, from education and social care to housing, environmental services, and corporate operations. IT supports more than 150 locations across the region, including schools, offices, operational facilities, and public-facing services. For Ian Forrest, head of IT at West Lothian Council, keeping that estate secure, resilient, and available was getting harder.

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>
> Ian Forrest, head of IT, West Lothian Council

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Their security challenges were many. Ransomware threats were rising across the local government and education sectors. Sophisticated phishing attacks demanded stronger defenses. Protecting sensitive citizen and employee data across a distributed environment that spans corporate, public, and education security zones required a platform capable of delivering visibility, consistency, and advanced threat prevention.

A 2025 education cyber security incident at the council raised urgency. The event exposed weaknesses in existing security zone controls and reinforced the need for stronger segmentation and faster detection and response capabilities. At the same time, the council's investment in another vendor's platform was nearing the end of its cycle, and the growth in hybrid working and cloud adoption meant the next platform needed to scale with the organization, not just serve it as it stood. "Long gone are the days of a closed environment within networks," Forrest explained. "We wanted to make sure the products that came in absolutely met the requirements."

SOLUTION

When the council evaluated the market, it compared several vendors. Check Point delivered what Forrest categorized as the strongest balance of threat prevention, visibility, operational simplicity, and scalability. Crucially, it offered those capabilities within a single ecosystem, something the council had identified as a strategic goal. "We wanted to consolidate as much technology as possible into those systems," Forrest said.

At the core of the deployment, the council implemented Check Point Endpoint Security across corporate, public, and education security zones. The solution provides comprehensive endpoint protection, threat emulation, and threat extraction capabilities, guarding against ransomware and malware across thousands of devices distributed across more than 150 sites. "Check Point delivered the strongest balance of threat prevention, visibility, scalability and operational simplicity, all of which is key in what we're trying to achieve by integrating endpoint, network, and MDR capabilities for that single ecosystem."

To extend coverage across its environment, West Lothian Council deployed Check Point Managed Detection and Response offering providing 24/7 monitoring, threat detection, and incident response. For education, the council uses APCR (Advanced Prevention and Cloud Response). Together, these services deliver the totality of strategic security cover the council requires without requiring its team to build and staff that capability in-house.

Check Point Firewalls replaced individually managed, site-level firewalls rationalizing what had been a sprawling firewall estate into a Check Point portal operated through Check Point Unified Management Platform. The shift gave the council network segmentation across all sites and a single pane of glass for monitoring and managing the security environment. Check Point VPN replaced the council's legacy VPN solution, delivering secure access for hybrid workers and a more reliable remote connectivity experience.

Support from the local Check Point team compressed what might have been weeks of migration work into a manageable rollout and the Check Point support relationship has continued to prove its value, with engineers available for critical issues around the clock when needed.

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OUTCOME

Since deploying Check Point, West Lothian Council has seen measurable improvements across cyber resilience, operational efficiency, and security posture: with particularly strong gains in its ability to manage and respond to threats across a complex, distributed environment.

The move to centralized management through Check Point Unified Management Platform transformed how the team operates day to day. What had been a fragmented collection of site-by-site firewall management became a single, unified view that reduced investigation effort, improved visibility, and freed the team to focus on delivering business value rather than spending time correlating logs across the estate. "Without it we would be spending lots of time looking through logs trying to correlate and ultimately, perhaps, miss any vulnerabilities or threat actors within the environment," Forrest said.

The ability for Check Point to surface security intelligence from data noise stood out. "The visibility across the environment and the ability to correlate endpoint, network, and MDR intelligence has been particularly impressive," Forrest noted. "This significantly reduces the investigation effort for my team and improves incident response and effectiveness."

Check Point Services has also strengthened the council's cyber insurance posture. The service demonstrates to assessors, including cyber insurance underwriters at Zurich and PSN compliance reviewers, that the council has mature, monitored security controls in place, along with ransomware protection and incident response readiness. The council presents biannual reports to its corporate governance boards detailing what Check Point has detected, remediated, and flagged as near misses. "Check Point Services have provided us with absolute, tremendous, fantastic support to date, and I'm sure that will continue through the relationship over the next seven years," he said.

Following the 2025 education cyber security incident, the council was able to address the security zone weaknesses the event exposed by strengthening controls across the education environment using Check Point capabilities deployed as part of the broader rollout.

Supplier access management also improved. The council secured and simplified the process by which third-party vendors access key council systems — making the experience more secure and more straightforward for suppliers at the same time.

"Check Point protects our citizen, employee, and corporate data," Forrest said. "It supports uninterrupted service delivery and enables digital transformation and strengthens business continuity and disaster recovery for West Lothian Council."

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About Check Point Software Technologies Ltd.

Check Point Software Technologies Ltd. is a global cyber security leader protecting more than 100,000 organizations worldwide. Its mission is to secure enterprises' AI transformation. With a prevention-first approach and an open ecosystem architecture, Check Point helps organizations block advanced threats, prioritize exposures, and automate security operations across complex digital environments. The unified architecture simplifies protection across hybrid networks, multi-cloud environments, digital workspaces, and AI systems. Structured around four strategic pillars, Hybrid Mesh Network Security, Workspace Security, Exposure Management, and AI Security, Check Point delivers consistent protection and visibility across multivendor environments, enabling organizations to reduce risk, improve efficiency, and accelerate innovation without increasing complexity.

LEARN MORE

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