

# Case Study: Chief Planning Officer

## Attribute 5: This Planning Authority has effective leadership

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### Context

The establishment of a Chief Planning Officer in the Council Management Structure.

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### What happened

The role of the Chief Planning Officer is to deliver on the East Ayrshire Strategic Plan 2022-27 “East Ayrshire is a place with strong, safe and vibrant communities where everyone has a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices and high quality services which are sustainable , accessible and meet peoples needs.” Following the Best Value Service Review, the post was recruited in January 2024 with the postholder taking up the post from late April 2024. The Chief Planning Officer reports to the Chief Governance Officer and reports indirect to the Chief Executive as Chief Advisor on Planning and Place matters. All planning reports are presented to Planning Committee, Cabinet and Council in the name of the Chief Planning Officer. The statutory Chief Planning Officer has been appointed at an appropriate level of seniority to ensure that the officer is adding value to strategic objectives and aspirations within the Council. As Head of the Planning Profession they are able to influence key planning, place and architectural decisions and are a member of the Corporate Management Team (CMT). The Chief Planning Officer by being part of the CMT is able to influence strategic decisions and ensure there is a place focus in Council decisions. The role helps to bring ideas, innovation and conversation to strategic decisions and hearing first hand the strategic issues of other services results in better planning outcomes and decisions.

The role also involves understanding and working with elected members to achieve their “buy-in” and retain a strategic long term view.

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### Areas of collaboration

Key Officer : Pamela Clifford, Chief Planning Officer

Stakeholders: Corporate Management Team, Elected Members, Planning Service Staff, Council Staff, Developers, Local Communities.

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### What was the overall result

Although the post is in its early stages, the benefits of having a Chief Planning Officer are being realized, even in this short period of time, whereby silo working is being broken down and having a greater influence over strategic decisions. Increased collaboration between services is being promoted and greater collaboration with developers, elected members and within the Planning team is having an overall collaborative approach. In the first 4 months, strong collaboration has taken place with the Convenor and Vice Convenor of the Planning Committee and other

Planning Committee members in terms of a new Committee Report format and early awareness of major development proposals.

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## Lessons learned

The provision of a Chief Planning Officer helps to strengthen leadership on planning and corporate recognition in a Council environment. Demonstrating the importance and positive influence of planning within the Council and outwith.

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## What contribution did it make towards delivering outcomes?

### **NPF4**

#### ☐ Sustainable places

- ☒ Climate change and nature crisis
- ☒ Climate mitigate and adaptation
- ☒ Biodiversity
- ☒ Natural Places
- ☒ Soils
- ☒ Forestry, woodland and trees
- ☒ Historic assets and places
- ☐ Green belts
- ☒ Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings
- ☐ Coast development
- ☒ Energy
- ☒ Zero waste
- ☒ Sustainable transport

#### ☐ Liveable places

- ☒ Design, quality and place
- ☒ Local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods
- ☒ Quality homes
- ☒ Rural homes
- ☒ Infrastructure first
- ☒ Heat and cooling
- ☒ Blue and green infrastructure
- ☒ Play, recreation and sport
- ☒ Flood risk and water management
- ☒ Health and safety
- ☒ Digital Infrastructure

☐ Productive places

☒ Community Wealth Building

☒ Business and industry

☒ City, town, local and commercial centres

☒ Retail

☒ Rural development

☒ Tourism

☐ Culture and creativity

☐ Aquaculture

☒ Minerals

Place and Wellbeing Outcomes

☒ Movement

☒ Spaces

☒ Resources

☒ Civic

☒ Stewardship