

**COMMITTEE:** East Lothian Council

**MEETING DATE:** 26 August 2025

**BY:** Executive Director for Council Resources

**REPORT TITLE:** Appointment of Chief Planning Officer

**REPORT STATUS:** Public

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## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek formal approval of Council of Graeme Marsden as East Lothian Council's Chief Planning Officer

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are recommended:

- 2.1 To appoint Graeme Marsden to the statutory post of Chief Planning Officer.

## **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) requires that each planning authority in Scotland must appoint a Chief Planning Officer.
- 3.2 The appointment role of the Chief Planning Officer became a statutory requirement in April 2024, to advise authorities on planning and other functions relating to development.
- 3.3 The post of Chief Planning Officer is to help strengthen leadership on planning and corporate recognition of the importance and positive influence of planning within their authorities. As required by the Act, guidance on the role of Chief Planning Officer was produced by the Scottish Government in March 2024. A copy of this guidance is contained as a background paper to this report. Planning authorities

must have regard to the appropriate qualifications and experience outlined in this guidance when making an appointment to the role.

- 3.4 In May 2025, Keith Dingwall, the Chief Planning Officer and Service Manager for Planning, was appointed as the Head of Development. Following a recruitment campaign, in July 2025, Graeme Marsden was confirmed as the preferred candidate to replace Keith Dingwall as Service Manager for Planning and Chief Planning Officer.
- 3.5 Mr Marsden has an undergraduate degree BSc (Hons) Urban & Regional Planning from Heriot-Watt University, membership of the Royal Town Planning Institute and 17 years' post-graduate experience in planning and planning-related roles. The last eight of those years have been at East Lothian Council, firstly at the Council's Planning Obligations Officer and more recently as a Project Manager within the Development Service.
- 3.6 It is considered that Mr Marsden has the relevant skills and experience that are necessary for the role. Mr Marsden commenced his new role as Service Manager for Planning on 1 August 2025; therefore, it is recommended to approve Mr Marsden's appointment to the statutory position of Chief Planning Officer.

#### **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None.

#### **5 RESOURCE AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Finance: There are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendations in this report with all posts provided for within approved budgets
- 5.2 Human Resources: None
- 5.3 Other (e.g. Legal/IT): None
- 5.4 Risk: None

#### **6 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1 ***Select the statement that is appropriate to your report by placing an 'X' in the relevant box.***

An Integrated Impact Assessment screening process has been undertaken and the subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on: equality and human rights; tackling socio-

X
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economic disadvantages and poverty; climate change, the environment and sustainability; the Council's role as a corporate parent; or the storage/collection of personal data.

**or**

The subject of this report has been through the Integrated Impact Assessment process and impacts have been identified as follows:

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Subject	Impacts identified (Yes, No or N/A)
Equality and human rights	
Socio-economic disadvantage/poverty	
Climate change, the environment and sustainability	
Corporate parenting and care-experienced young people	
Storage/collection of personal data	
Other	

*[Enter information on impacts that have been identified]*

The Integrated Impact Assessment relating to this report has been published and can be accessed via the Council's website:

[https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210602/equality\\_and\\_diversity/12014/integrated\\_impact\\_assessments](https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210602/equality_and_diversity/12014/integrated_impact_assessments)

## **7 APPENDICES**

7.1 None

## **8 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

8.1 Chief Planning Officers Guidance  
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/chief-planning-officers-guidance/>

## 9 AUTHOR AND APPROVAL DETAILS

### Report Author(s)

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<b>Date</b>	16 July 2025

### Head of Service Approval

<b>Name</b>	Keith Dingwall
<b>Designation</b>	Head of Development
<b>Confirmation that IIA and other relevant checks (e.g. finance/legal) have been completed</b>	I confirm that IIA and other relevant checks (e.g. finance/legal) have been completed.
<b>Approval Date</b>	17 July 2025