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# HOPE

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Victoria Hills MRTPI FICE, Chief Executive, RTPI

# Chief Planning Officers

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[www.rtpi.org.uk/chiefplanningofficers](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/chiefplanningofficers)

# Chief Planning Officers

- Post 1945, Chief Planners Officers were key players in local authorities
- Impact of 1980s deregulation
- Planning side lined and diminished corporate presence



# Key findings of research

In the UK and Ireland (excluding NI):

Only **23%** of local authorities surveyed had a head of planning service that reported directly to the Chief Executive

**1 in 10** local authorities did not have an individual post holder responsible for planning



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# Management structures in local authorities

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*Figure 2: The management structure of local government*

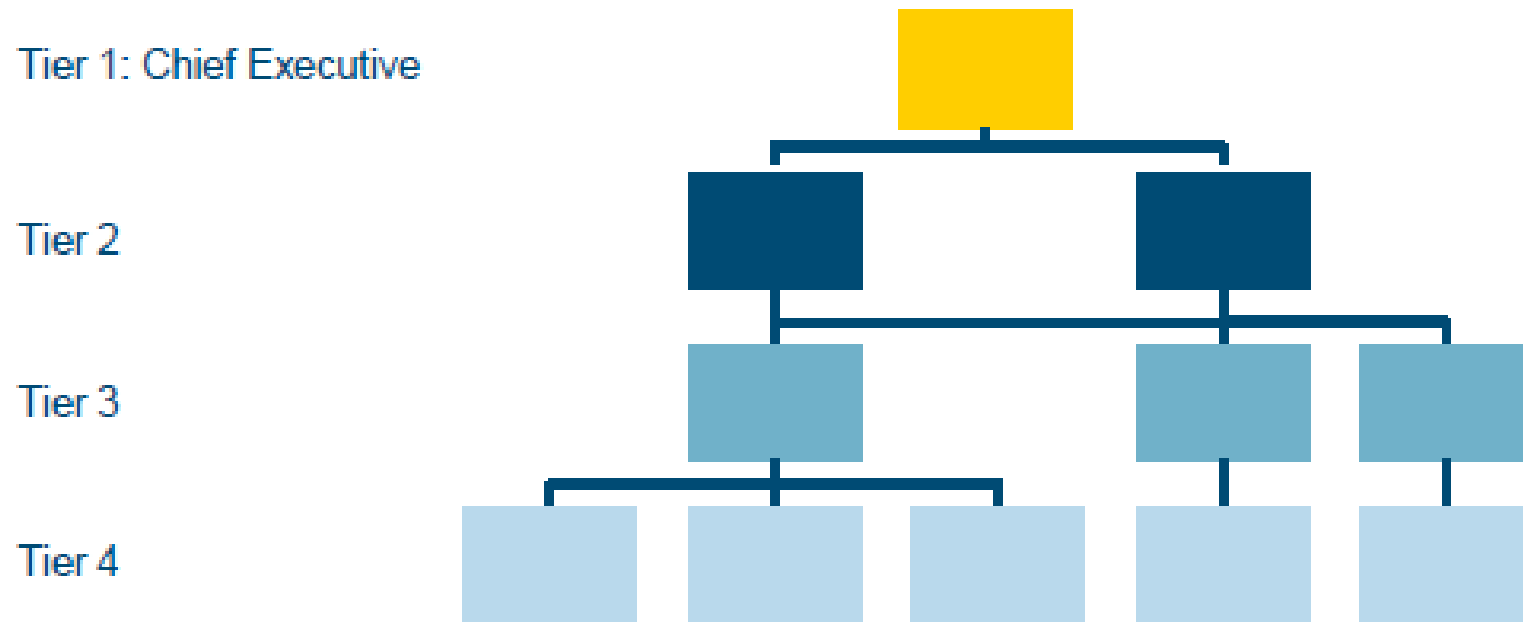


Figure 1: Percentage of the most senior planners within the different tiers of local government, across the English Regions and UK Nations



# Chief Planning Officers



*The training that a planner has is fundamentally about making connections, networking, seeing the big picture, so they are great skills to add into corporate discussions.*

(Chief Executive, Local Authority in England)





# Chief Planning Officers

## Main findings

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- Multiple benefits of consulting planners from the outset of the decision making process around development.
- **“...understanding that we can contribute enormously to the work that you do if you engage with us much earlier.”**  
– (Chief Planning Officer, England)



# Chief Planning Officers

## Main findings

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- Having a Chief Planning Officer at the top table can provide:
  - ✓ Long-term vision
  - ✓ Engagement with communities
  - ✓ certainty for development



# Chief Planning Officers

## Main findings

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- Planning is a powerful lever to deliver almost all the key areas within an authority's corporate strategy.
- Important interface with elected members and the public
- Horizon scanning - "What is this place going to look like?"



# The Plymouth Plan

- Joined-up, investment programme and all in one corporate strategy
- Planning department led the process
- Worked to understand councillor's ambitions
- Achieved consensus
- Shows benefits of putting planners at the top table



# Recommendations

- Legislate to require Chief Planning Officers
- Follow Scotland's lead
- Engage planners early
- Mid-career mentoring and management training



# Heads of Planning Everywhere

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# Heads of Planning Everywhere

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- Scaling up the conversation across the UK
- Complement not compete
- Heads of Planning Policy Scotland
- Planning Officers Society of Wales



# Heads of Planning Everywhere

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On the agenda:

- Networking
- Sharing Best practice/ Overcoming challenges
- Resourcing
- Putting planning at the top table





# Heads of Planning Everywhere

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- Watch this space
- Invites in early 2020



# #TotalPlanning

1. Political leadership
2. Executive power
3. Resourced team
4. Funding
5. Community





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# Thanks for listening

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