

Head of Strategy & Commissioning - Sport, Libraries and Wellbeing

Service Place	Reporting to Director of Culture	Location Civic/Hybrid	Grade D
----------------------	--	---------------------------------	-------------------

About the role

The Head of Strategy & Commissioning provides strategic leadership for Salford's city-wide sport, library and wellbeing system. Operating at a senior level, the postholder sets long-term strategic direction, leads major programmes, and commissions high-impact services that improve population health, increase participation, expand access to culture and learning, and reduce inequalities.

The role acts as the Council's principal client lead for Salford Community Leisure (SCL) and engages with partners across the sport, libraries, health, education and voluntary sectors, providing visible place-based leadership and championing prevention, active lifestyles, learning, digital inclusion and community wellbeing.

Key responsibilities

Strategic leadership

- Lead the development and implementation of strategies linked to sport, libraries and community wellbeing, ensuring alignment with population needs, corporate priorities, the 10-year Health and Wellbeing strategy, and GM level ambitions.
- Embed a whole-council, whole-system approach to facilitate change management, transformation and innovation.
- Establish effective working relationships with senior officers, elected members, and key partners on matters relating to sport, libraries and wellbeing.

Partnership and collaboration

- Lead strategic partnerships with Sport England, Arts Council England, Libraries Connected, GM Moving and the NHS/ICB.
- Foster internal partnerships across Public Health, Children's Services, Education, Regeneration, Property, Skills and Work and Adult Social Care.

Commissioned services

- Lead strategic commissioning frameworks across sport, libraries and wellbeing, ensuring services deliver strategic outcomes and social value.
- Provide senior client leadership of commissioned delivery partners, including Salford Community Leisure.
- Develop and implement policies and strategies to improve library and leisure services for Salford's residents and communities.

Commercial, financial and contract management

- Provide strategic leadership to maximise revenue, efficiencies and external investment across sport, library and wellbeing services.
- Oversee high-value contracts, asset plans and financial frameworks, ensuring value for money, compliance and long-term sustainability.
- Ensure robust contract management, performance oversight, governance and service improvement.
- Collaborate with Salford Community Leisure and relevant Council teams to ensure the effective management of Council-operated libraries, sports facilities, leisure centres, community assets, parks, and open spaces.

Innovation and transformation

- Identify and secure opportunities for innovation and joint working that increases engagement in services and addresses inequalities.
- Secure external funding and strategic co-investment from partners such as Sport England, Arts Council, NHS/ICB and GMCA.
- Shape long-term investment plans, business cases and capital strategies.
- Lead strategic reviews of estates and assets to support long-term planning and future capital investment.
- Drive digital transformation across sport, libraries and wellbeing, including modern digital infrastructure and technology-enabled participation.

Health, wellbeing and prevention

- Champion leisure and library services as core drivers of improved health, wellbeing, social connection and resilience.
- Work with primary care networks on general practice and physical activity champions, in addition to working with public health on opportunities within secondary care.

People Management

- Provide strategic leadership, modelling Salford's leadership behaviours.
- Lead and develop a new team structure (proposed phased recruitment of two Strategic Lead roles and a Project Officer), promoting high standards, accountability, and continuous learning.

Policy, insight and strategic advocacy

- Represent Salford in national and regional networks, influencing policy, investment and system reform.
- Provide evidence-led insight and analysis to support decision-making, business cases and strategic planning.

Key outcomes

Strategic and system-wide outcomes

- Clear, ambitious and evidence-based strategies delivered across the city i.e. 10-year Library Strategy and a Sport, Physical Activity and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Strong alignment with the council's Corporate Plan 'This is Our Salford', the Salford Way, Salford's Health and Wellbeing strategy and prevention ambitions of the city.
- Increased engagement and reduced inequalities, and measurable improvements in population wellbeing, participation levels, literacy and education.

Culture and leadership

- A positive, values-led, inclusive culture that empowers staff, partners and communities.
- Strong cross-council collaboration ensuring sport, libraries and wellbeing are embedded in place shaping, community development and health improvement.

Operational and contract performance

- High-performing sport and library services delivered through strong contract management and strategic oversight.
- Robust performance frameworks, data insights and evaluation tools that demonstrate impact and inform evidence led commissioning.

Investment, growth and innovation

- Increased external investment from Sport England, the Arts Council, NHS/ICB, GMCA and other partners.
- A modernised leisure and library estate aligned with future population needs.

Community impact

- Stronger community resilience, improved health and wellbeing, and enhanced social cohesion.
- Enhanced reputation for Salford as a city that champions prevention and innovative wellbeing approaches.
- Improved education and literacy outcomes for Salford residents.
- Increased participation among children, young people and under-represented groups.

What we need from you

Skills

- Exceptional strategic leadership and systemwide influencing skills, with the ability to set long term direction and lead complex change across multiple services, partners and sectors.
- Strong financial, commercial and contract management expertise, with the ability to oversee high value commissioned services and ensure strategic alignment, value for money and sustainability
- Highly developed political acumen, communication and negotiation skills, with confidence operating at senior officer, Cabinet and partnership board level.
- Proven ability to lead transformation and innovation, translating strategic ambitions into deliverable programmes and measurable outcomes.
- Strong analytical capability, using data, evidence and insight to shape strategy, drive commissioning decisions and monitor performance across large service portfolios.
- Deep understanding of public health, prevention, culture, libraries, sport, leisure and local government systems, and the ability to integrate these into coherent whole system approaches.

Experience

- Extensive senior-level experience across sport, leisure, libraries, wellbeing or public health, including responsibility for strategic planning, transformation or commissioning at scale.
- A demonstrable track record of designing and delivering major strategies, complex programmes, and systemwide partnerships that achieve population level outcomes.
- Significant experience of managing commissioned services, including contract governance, performance management, financial oversight and partnership development.
- Experience of securing and managing external investment, building compelling business cases, and leading capital or service development programmes.
- Proven experience of working with senior political and executive stakeholders, including elected members, national bodies, funding agencies and community leaders.

Knowledge

- Deep understanding of the sport, leisure, library and wellbeing landscape including national policy, regional priorities, and statutory responsibilities such as those under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.
- Strong knowledge of public health principles, prevention approaches, inequality reduction and community development.
- Awareness of national and regional policy across libraries, sport, physical activity and wellbeing.
- Understanding of commissioning frameworks, co-production, social value, and asset-based approaches.

Qualifications

- Degree-level education or equivalent experience in sport management, physical activity, libraries, public health, leisure or a related field.
- Commitment to continuous professional development.

What we can offer you

Your ongoing professional development and success in your role is important to us, and that is why we provide a variety of learning and development opportunities. Within the sections below you will find development options tailored to you which will enable you to further develop your existing skills and learn new ones at a pace that suits you best. If you are joining us now, your development will form part of ongoing discussions with your manager. If you are an existing employee, you should use your Personal Development Reviews to discuss your development with your manager and create your development journey. It's important you also take full advantage of any informal learning available to you during the course of your work.

Online learning

Develop your knowledge across a wide range of areas through our Me-Learning platform, with over 200 free courses to choose from. To have the best possible start and comply with current legislation, you must complete the following modules: Welcome to Salford, Health and Safety in the Office, GDPR, Equality Essentials, and Safeguarding Children and Adults. You may also benefit from a variety of courses in categories such as Business Skills, IT and Project Management which are available to learn at your own convenience and pace.

Professional Development

Gain role specific skills and time to learn through a wide range of development opportunities. Learn whilst working and get support towards your qualification through an apprenticeship standard. Access professional development ranging from entry level to master's type qualifications, including achieving a role appropriate qualification. Details can be found on [the Institute of apprenticeships](#) website.

A digital organisation

Developing your digital skills

Our ambition is to provide our workforce with the right level of digital capabilities needed to be successful. Whatever your current digital abilities are, we can provide development ranging from essential workplace skills to specialist workplace skills. These will be delivered through our Digital Skills Academy using both self-directed and guided learning opportunities to enable you to develop. Additionally, you can access free online courses through the [iDea](#) website.

Sharing your digital skills

Our goal is to support you to share your digital knowledge with other people. Our Digital Eagles programme has been designed to cover basic digital skills and build your confidence

to assist others. By the end of this programme, you will join hundreds of staff members who already are digital eagles, and be able to help colleagues, customers, residents, or people in your personal life with all things digital.

Our organisation's values

We have four values: Pride, Passion, People, Personal responsibility.

[Our four values](#) are central to the way we communicate about the council and the way in which we behave with colleagues, customers, and partners - so that we live and breathe our values each day.

Our values



Pride

Passion

People

Personal responsibility

Application guidance

We are a values-based organisation so reflecting our values or a values-based approach in your evidence will support your application.

The different sections of this role profile are there to give you an understanding of the purpose of the role. The 'what we need from you' section outlines the minimum criteria you will need to meet within your application.