

Introduction

Salford Community Leisure (SCL) is a dynamic, non-for-profit organisation committed to enriching the lives of the people of Salford through sports, leisure, culture, and well-being.

It is a co-operative and community benefit society with charitable status with an annual turnover of £20m which is run by and for the people of Salford. Its core belief is that leisure and culture should be at the heart of every community. It is, thus, committed to enhancing the physical and cultural wellbeing of the people of Salford via delivery of a range of sport, leisure, library and cultural opportunities which ensure that every individual has access to the opportunities and services that support physical and mental health, creativity, and personal development.

SCLL manages a wide range of facilities and services.

The 60+ venues it runs in Salford attract nearly four million visits each year. They include seven leisure centres, eight community centres, sixteen libraries, major museums/galleries/heritage venues (including Ordsall Hall and Salford Museum and Art Gallery), the Salford Watersports Centre, Cleavley Athletics Track and multiple community sports pitches, playing fields, tennis courts, and school facilities.

It also runs Salford's Active Lifestyles Service, its large Active Communities (sports development) Team and its Music and Performing Arts Salford (MAPAS).

The city

Salford is one of the fastest-growing local authorities in England and Wales and is becoming more diverse. It is creative, inclusive and proud. With a thriving cultural scene, strong sense of community and bold vision for the future, it has high ambitions for its residents and the city itself.

It is a rapidly regenerating city, located 'back-to-back' with Manchester, and known for its industrial heritage. It is a major hub for digital/media industries (BBC, ITV) and a vibrant area for dining, shopping, and arts (The Lowry, Imperial War Museum North). A surprisingly green authority, almost half of its area comprises parks, nature reserves, and woodlands.

The city balances urban, waterfront living at Salford Quays and leafy suburbs like Worsley with areas which experience high levels of deprivation. It has excellent connectivity with Manchester via the Metrolink, multiple train stations, and easy access to Manchester International Airport. Salford's combination of heritage, culture, and connectivity makes it a popular alternative to living directly in central Manchester.

However, it also faces major ongoing health challenges and inequalities and is ranked as the 21st most deprived local authority in England (out of 317). An ambitious set of strategies has been developed to tackle the issues faced and one key to these is the fact that physical exercise, creativity, learning and community development are all identified as options and opportunities which change people's lives for the better.

The set up

The CEO of SCL sits on, and reports to, the society’s board of directors – which ensures that the company conducts its affairs in accordance with its purpose and the rules of the organisation.

The board sets policies, strategies and objectives and has full legal responsibility for running the business.

SCL employs over six hundred people and pride itself on being a local employer – more than 70% of its workforce resides in the city.

Summary of the role

SCLL’s sporting, cultural and social programmes, experiences and events promote inclusion, happiness - enhancing the mental, physical and social wellbeing of Salford’s residents.

The CEO role is pivotal - responsible for the strategic development and oversight of a substantial portfolio of physical assets, developmental programmes and digital services, ensuring that the society’s work directly improves the mental, physical and social wellbeing of the people of Salford.

The CEO will work closely with the board, lead internal teams and work with external partners to drive, innovation and financial sustainability while ensuring that inclusion, access and community impact remain central. This is likely to involve leading major strategic projects and improvement/change programmes to support delivery of agreed outcomes across libraries, sport & physical activity, cultural and community venues and services.

SCL departmental structure

SPORTS & LEISURE	LIBRARIES	ACTIVE COMMUNITIES	MUSEUMS & GALLERIES	COMMUNITY FACILITIES	ACTIVE LIFESTYLES	MAPAS
Leisure centres (7) Swimming Pools (5) Gyms (7) Futsal Group Exercise CrossFit Salford Watersports Centre Clifton Country Park Café	Libraries (16) Books @ Home Schools library service	Youth Clubs Holiday activities Dance Gymnastics Soccer stars Active Education SEND Activities Community Focused Projects	Salford Museum & Art Gallery Ordsall Hall Local History Library Creative Health	Community Centres (9) Community Schools (4) Tennis courts (8) Grass pitches Cleavely Athletic Track Parr Fold Park Café	Exercise on referral CAN-Move Prehab 4Cancer Wellbeing walks	Instrumental lessons School music service Performing Arts Choirs

Essential to the CEO’s skillset will be the ability to balance public service values with commercial thinking. S/he/they will ensure the continued delivery of inclusive, value-for-money services via effective leadership, challenge, innovation and business planning. Operating within a complex, politically and financially challenging environment, they will help shape SCL’s future — delivering ambitious programmes to promote involvement in and deliver the benefits of active lives, sport, libraries and community learning.

Who is needed

The new CEO will be a strategic, inspiring and collaborative leader with a deep understanding of how sport, culture, libraries and community services enhance and improve lives. They will have strong business acumen, a people-focused approach, and a commitment to delivering public value in a complex, high-profile environment, balancing social impact with income generation.

In addition to being a pivotal leadership position, this appointment comes at an important moment. SCL's present contract with SCC has been extended by five years to 31 March 2030 to allow for the completion (by the city council) of a vision and strategy framework. This will then be followed by consideration of management options post 2030.

The new CEO will lead the organisation through the next phase of its evolution, maintaining and building upon its established reputation and influence. The role requires a wide-ranging set of skills, capabilities and experience, proven leadership and credibility at the highest level.

The successful candidate will, thus, bring excellent strategic understanding, operational management experience and knowledge of financial performance and compliance. They will have an excellent partnership work-based background - of particular importance in respect of the society's relationship with Salford City Council, public health and community partners.

Accountable to SCL's board and the wider membership, the new CEO will develop the strategic direction of the business and lead the organisation to deliver a rolling medium-term strategic business plan, balanced budgets and effective governance in compliance with relevant law.

SCL is, thus, looking for a strategic, inclusive and politically astute leader with a track record of delivering service improvement within complex organisations. You will bring the credibility and judgement required to navigate high levels of public interest, board, community and stakeholder engagement, alongside the ability to inspire teams and build a culture of trust, integrity and continuous improvement.

For the right candidate, this is a rare opportunity to lead services that are fundamental to the life, sustainability and reputation of one of the UK's most distinctive cities.

Job description

Heading up SCL's leadership team and reporting to the SCL board, you will determine strategic objectives, lead on financial planning and develop the culture of the organisation. You will also continue to grow SCL's income base while optimising the value and contribution made by its assets to the city and identifying opportunities for growth. You will:

- ◀ Provide strategic/organisational leadership, actively and effectively promoting SCL's vision, values and priorities ensuring that they are visible and embedded across the organisation.
- ◀ Represent SCL with authority, integrity and sensitivity, building/maintaining strong partnership-based relationships and providing strategic advice to, the city mayor and elected members, SCC staff, stakeholders, local communities, other partners and the wider leisure and culture sector to deliver the agreed sport, leisure and culture vision for the city.
- ◀ Lead and empower a high performing, creative management team.

- ◀ Set, monitor, review and be accountable for performance across all SCL services, ensuring that all key organisational plans are delivered and performance targets are met.
- ◀ Ensure that SCL governance is transparent and effective – maintaining the values-based inclusive organisational culture that embraces diversity, equity and innovation at every level.
- ◀ Ensure the efficient and innovative management of all resources - to optimise SCL's organisational capacity, commercial and social and effectiveness.
- ◀ Lead, deliver and oversee facilities and services which contribute to the delivery of agreed outcomes and improve the mental and physical wellbeing of Salford residents through sport, physical activity, culture, libraries, community facilities, services and events.
- ◀ Work with influence key decisions/decision-makers, seeking funding, building capacity, building profile, developing networks and relationships.

Person specification

Criteria	Essential / desirable
Experience, qualifications & training	<p>Proven senior strategic leadership experience and success within a comparable large and complex organisation delivering excellent business and customer focused services alongside social and community impact.</p> <p>Leading and developing management teams and staff across the organisation.</p> <p>Leading change that challenges existing ways of working, and forms of service delivery providing better community outcomes</p> <p>Financial performance and fiscal/regulatory compliance management experience.</p> <p>Educated to degree level or equivalent in a relevant discipline.</p> <p>Management or post graduate qualification.</p>
Skills, knowledge and competencies	<p>Excellent communication/influencing skills; ability to manage complex relationships with a diverse range of senior leaders/stakeholders from a range of community, public and private sector organisations - in politicised environments.</p> <p>Strong leadership skills, commercial understanding and business acumen.</p> <p>Operational management experience/understanding working within at least some of sport/physical activity/culture/libraries/heritage environments aligned with in-depth understanding of the challenges faced in public sector/commercial contexts.</p> <p>Excellent financial and budget management skills.</p> <p>Strategic thinker able to produce/adapt new ideas, approaches and solutions.</p> <p>A skilled communicator who does so with clarity, conviction and enthusiasm and can demonstrate integrity, create rapport and build trust and confidence.</p> <p>Proven experience leading/promoting successful change, including service redesign to improve impact and efficiency.</p> <p>Ability to analyse strategic and operational issues, develop innovative and practical solutions and deliver them effectively.</p> <p>Experience developing strategies and action plans to achieve outcomes and drive continuous improvement.</p> <p>Demonstrates via behaviours and actions an absolute commitment to SCL values</p> <p>Proven track record of monitoring and managing KPIs.</p> <p>Ability to interpret and act on a wide range of complex data.</p>
Other	<p>A high degree of personal and professional integrity and credibility.</p> <p>Clear understanding of how SCL can contribute to improving health, reducing inequalities, and increasing participation in physical and cultural activity.</p> <p>Ability to provide visible and supportive leadership, empowering, enabling, motivating and developing the workforce and fostering a positive organisational culture.</p> <p>Experience of formal governance and reporting at executive and board level, including strategic/performance scrutiny</p>

What we offer

Salary and benefits

The salary is £100,500 (with a pay award pending).

The post holder is entitled to 27 days annual leave plus bank holidays.

How to apply

The recruitment process is being supported by Knight, Kavanagh & Page (KKP).

Interested candidates are invited, should they wish to, to informally discuss the role with John Eady, CEO of KKP who is leading on this appointment process. He can be contacted at:

M: john.eady@kkp.co.uk

T: +44 (0)7973 386215

Your CV and personal statement should be submitted via the greater.jobs portal. They should include:

- ◀ Your contact details.
- ◀ Your CV.
- ◀ Supporting statement – specifically detailing how your experience aligns with the job and the person specification (what you bring to the role).
- ◀ Other required pre-employment checks and equal opportunities monitoring detail.

The recruitment process

- ◀ The closing date for the receipt of applications is 23.59 on Monday 25 May 2026.
- ◀ Interviews are presently scheduled to take place in Salford in June 2026. These may involve you needing to be available over two days.
- ◀ Due diligence will be carried out as part of the application process. This may include searches conducted via internet search engines and any public social media accounts.

Application pack

We have sought to cover all the necessary issues in this pack. As noted above, you are welcome to have an informal discussion about the role with KKP.,

SCL is keen to ensure that everyone can apply. If it would assist you or someone you know to receive this pack in large print format, please contact KKP.