

Lichfield District Council – candidate support

Executive Recruitment Case Study





Planning a move back into a much-changed local government after working in the private sector and going for your first chief executive role could have been a stressful experience, but Simon Fletcher found WME's support smoothed the way

Simon Fletcher's journey to becoming Chief Executive of Lichfield District Council has taken him through various local government roles, private sector consultancy and even a stint 8,000 miles away on the Falkland Islands.

It's been a well thought through career path that has led him to this latest role.

As Simon explains: 'My career to date has been very deliberate; I have sought to try to find new challenges and experiences to develop different facets of my skill sets.'

His career began at a district council and over the last 20 years he has held posts including strategic director for the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead and director of central services for the Government of the Falkland Islands. More recently he was head of the business change practice at Agilisys Ltd, where he has worked with local authorities on improving their use of digital and developing transformation plans.

'I understand district councils and have managed several of the services they offer. I believe districts are closest to their communities with the services they provide,' he explains. 'The Falkland Islands was an opportunity to develop my strategic understanding, where Agilisys has helped me understand the various approaches and models of service that work in local government. Sometimes you have to make decisions that are not universally popular and so the most important thing I've learnt is the need to engage the local community and be open and transparent.'

'I wanted to take all that experience gained back into the public sector. But I was deliberately selective. I wouldn't have gone for the Chief Executive role at any council, I was looking for a district council.'

'Lichfield attracted me because the council is really well run, financially it's as stable as any local authority is, and has a leader and cabinet I felt are ambitious for their local community and open to new things.'



"WME have been really supportive. They kept me informed every step of the way."

Simon Fletcher

Having been shortlisted for the Lichfield role he initially had to pull out for family reasons.

'I had done quite a lot of research about the council, which Chantelle from WME really helped with..'

He explains: 'WME brokered an opportunity for me to informally speak to leader and I found him incredibly impressive and ambitious for the council. I felt we could work really effectively together, which is really important to me.'

After a series of assessments and interviews, all designed and led by WME, Simon secured the role. He says the whole experience was very different from previous jobs he'd applied for.

'I hadn't applied for a job in local government since around 2014-15 and I had a real sense that things had moved on a bit. WME have been really supportive. They kept me informed every step of the way and let me know what was needed at every stage of the process. It was incredibly smooth, well-organised and less stressful than some of these situations have been in the past – when you don't know what's happening and don't hear anything.'

'It wasn't simply a case of me sending in an application form and then going for an interview. They have been much more responsive – proactively reaching out to me to make sure I was fully informed for each different stage. And since getting the role they have stayed in touch so that I'm fully prepared when I start at the council.'



"It's critically important to get it right – your political legacy hinges on getting the right chief executive".

Read more from Lichfield District Council's Leader, Councillor Doug Pullen



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