

Frequently Asked Questions

Proposed relocation of Farnworth Library

1. Why should the library move to a new site?

The condition of the building is deteriorating which is having an impact on the running costs. A property maintenance consultation was completed in 2023, where users stated the:

- *"Toilets at Farnworth, only one for everyone, so not enough and not accessible"*
- *"No security, there's no cctv at Farnworth Library to safeguard staff and public"*

The current location is just outside of town centre where there is a large-scale redevelopment programme. This leads to the risk of the library being outside of the high street and the new focus of activity.

The design of the current library is very traditional and not a flexible space that meets the needs of modern library service. Activity within the library is restricted by the layout.

The new library co-located at Little Lever has revitalised the offer within that ward and similar aspirations are planned for Farnworth.

Relocating would make the library part of the High Street, having a positive impact on economic challenges faced by town centres and unlock the potential for community value. It would help to increase the range of activities within the town centre, such as leisure, community hub and cultural enterprises. It would be a safe communal space that can be used to create a healthier and more cohesive community.

2. How will this be funded?

The Council plan to use revenue funding. In addition, we have submitted a bid to the Arts Council England 'Library Improvement Fund' to pay for a significant proportion of the costs.

3. When would it move?

The project would start after April 2026, with the library moving within 18 months of that date.

4. What would happen to the current library building?

The current library building would be retained by the council and reviewed as part of the [Strategic Asset Management Plan](#). A suitable new tenant would be sought with the findings from the Farnworth Plan for Neighbourhoods consultation guiding this process. Bolton Council are committed to exploring all opportunities to keep the building in civic use.

Farnworth has been selected as one of the 75 towns to receive up to £20m in Government funding. A Neighbourhood Board has been established to receive funding, bringing together those with a deep connection to the local area such as local businesses, grassroots campaigners, workplace representatives, faith and community leaders and any other relevant organisations. A key priority for the Farnworth Plan for Neighbourhoods is a Community Asset Review, which includes Farnworth Library. The Farnworth Plan for Neighbourhoods Funding is spread over a ten-year period with a split of 75% capital, 25% revenue and could support development or repurposing of community assets.

5. Would the old library close before the new one opened?

Yes, but we would minimise the impact of this as much as possible. The closure would only be for around 2 weeks, whilst the books are moved across to the new site and all loans would be extended for this period and fines waived.

6. What about the rest of the community hub, who will take that space?

The council is exploring options for suitable partners to be located in this space, that will complement the library as a community asset.

7. What will happen to the Bolton College classroom at the current library?

Bolton College will be working with the council to find an appropriate space within Farnworth.

8. What will happen to the One Stop Shop service that is in the current location?

Early discussions indicate that this is a service that the community would like to continue. How this will work is yet to be agreed.

9. What will happen to the groups that meet in the old library?

Groups will all move to the new location, alongside new groups that develop as part of this opportunity.

10. What services will there be in the new library?

The Library at Farnworth Green will be purposefully designed to create a space that provides a transformational, rather than transactional, experience to visitors. The core offer of book borrowing, information provision and access to digital will continue to be a central focus but will be more accessible in an open and highly visible town centre location, co-located with other community facilities. It will be complemented by an exciting programme of community activity, with a focus on creative and cultural content. Initial concepts for the space have been developed and the Library at Farnworth Green will include a history of Farnworth exhibition, an imaginative children's library that promotes reading at the earliest opportunity, improved digital space and a beautiful urban outdoor space which links to the wider Farnworth Green outdoor performance area and events space.

11. What facilities will there be in the new library?

- Open spaces for events and cultural activities
- A history of Farnworth exhibition built into the space
- An increase in digital equipment and space for digital activities
- A community room available for hire, including reduced rates for community groups.
- An imaginative new children's library
- A Changing Places facility, public toilets and baby change

12. How would I access the library services / borrow items during the relocation?

The current library would remain open for the duration of the project, except for a short closure period whilst we move the books over to the new location. Arrangements would be made regarding the returning of books and exemption of fines during this time.

13. I am interested in using community spaces at Farnworth Library, who should I contact?

Please contact our team at lamcustomerservices@bolton.gov.uk

14. What will the opening hours of Farnworth Library be if it moves to a new location?

There are no plans to change the current opening hours as part of this move. If this changes, there would not be a reduction.

15. Would there be public transport links nearby?

There are several bus services that could be used to access the new location, more information can be found here: [Plan a journey | Bee Network | Powered by TfGM](#)

16. How would staff be impacted?

All library staff will transfer over to the new location.

17. Are there any other planned redevelopments at any of the other libraries within the borough?

We have no other current redevelopment plans at our other libraries.

18. Which space is proposed to be used for the library at Farnworth Green ?

It is proposed that the library would be re-located into the Community Hub at Farnworth Green which is located within the Rivington Building. The groundfloor Community Hub has been developed in response to the consultation findings in the 2019 Farnworth Masterplan and has always been a key component of the project. It is designated for community use and has not replaced any retail space.

19. How does the size of the new space compare to the current library?

The public area of the current library is around 371 m squared, the new space will be around 383 m squared

20. How do the visitor numbers at the current Farnworth library compare with the other District centre libraries?

2024-25	Visitors
Farnworth	41516
Little Lever	73551
Horwich	55386
Westhoughton	65361