



**FOCUS ON
FARNWORTH**

4 Year Plan

Pride in Place Initiative

backed by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

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1. Key priorities

1. Key priorities

Creating a thriving place

Community engagement identified an opportunity to review the locations of service provision and the preferred locations by prospective users.

Some residents indicate a lack of confidence moving around even within Farnworth and a strong identification with their immediate environment. For example, New Bury is perceived as a separate community from Farnworth town centre.

To address this a review of community facilities is proposed as part of the Investment Plan. This review will identify community facilities across the town and the demand for space to provide services.

Through a process of consultation with service users, space owners and service providers, the review will deliver an updated network of services that meets user requirements making use of community spaces that are convenient for local residents.

Improving the provision and network on bus services will enable local people to move more easily to places of work or training and for social activities.

Active travel routes developed through the walking cycling wheeling project will encourage access and movement around Farnworth particularly encouraging access to green spaces.

Project to progress this priority include:

- **Regeneration, High Street and Heritage:** Rock Hall Revival, Community Hubs Update and Playspace Revival;
- **Health & Wellbeing:** Harper Green Playing Fields; and
- **Transport:** Bus connectivity & Walking, wheeling and cycling.

1. Key priorities

Stronger communities

The Office of National Statistics dataset indicates a profound lack of social trust within the Farnworth community.*

The proposed Farnworth Fund seek to address this through two strands to promote cohesion:

- Firstly by developing the capacity of the community to come together in groups of shared interests.
- Secondly the fund will enable the development of a group of local volunteer grant assessors to be decision makers for the Fund.
- Thirdly the development support will enable local groups to develop their confidence and abilities, securing funding and managing their projects. Investing in these community groups will leave a long lasting legacy through a fully upskilled VCSE sector.

The community has identified the derelict nineteenth century Rock Hall as a focal point for community engagement and skills development bringing the building back as destination for the Farnworth community with local groups actively engaged in the physical regeneration process.

Project to progress this priority include:

- **Regeneration, High Street and Heritage:** Rock Hall Revival, Community Hubs Update and Playspace Revival;
- **Health & Wellbeing:** Harper Green Playing Fields; and
- **Cohesion:** Farnworth Fund and Community Engagement.

* Farnworth Dataset 2025, provided by Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHCLG), using Office of National Statistics Data, using Built Up Areas (2024) as geographical level

1. Key priorities

Taking back control

The Harper Green Playing Fields were identified during the engagement as an opportunity for the community to take control. It is a Council owned asset and to achieve its potential as an inclusive and well used sports facility, investment will need to be focused on serving the needs of the community, particularly its young people in this instance. The facilities have the potential for active leisure, providing enhanced opportunities for outdoor recreation, sports and wellbeing.

The community engagement work identified concerns around security and safety with the impact subtly restricting individuals' movement for fear of interaction with antisocial behaviour in the local community.

To take back control, in the first investment period investment will be made in improving localised lighting and CCTV provision based on evidence of crime data. This will be supported by communication activity through social media and print media.

Project to progress this priority include:

- **Safety & Security:** CCTV, Lighting and Wayfinding;
- **Health & Wellbeing:** Harper Green Playing Fields; and
- **Cohesion:** Community engagement

* Farnworth Dataset 2025, provided by Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHCLG), using Office of National Statistics Data, using Built Up Areas (2024) as geographical level

2. Planned interventions

#1 Farnworth Fund

Brief Description	Support for the development of voluntary, community and social enterprise groups in Farnworth through dedicated development staff and a grant fund providing minor grants to encourage social trust and community confidence. Support will be given to local groups to access other funding streams, multiplying the effectiveness of Pride in Place
Primary Intervention	Cohesion- Investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society, youth and community groups
Theme	Thriving places, Stronger Communities and Taking back control
Milestones	Agree Fund criteria with Board Grant Funding Agreement between Bolton Council and Bolton CVS Recruit key personnel Promote Fund to community Gather bids and award grants Ongoing development of community group capacity

#2 CCTV, Lighting and Wayfinding

Brief Description	Based on crime data and community feedback, the project will improve street lighting and CCTV coverage. The CCTV will be integrated into the wider borough network. Signage and wayfinding will improve networks around the town centre particularly between the town centre and the railway station and other points of interest around the town including Rock Hall
Primary Intervention	Safety and Security – Design and oversight of the built and landscaped environment to 'design out' crime and encourage positive behaviour
Theme	Stronger Communities
Milestones	Gathering safety data Identify locations Community engagement Procurement Delivery

#3 Playspace Revival

Brief Description	A programme to renovate/re-equip play areas across Farnworth with local community heavily involved in design. The objective is to encourage active play in a safe for all including those with disabilities, additional to any existing planned investment
Primary Intervention	Regeneration, high streets and heritage - Creating and improving green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments in the local area, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces
Theme	Thriving Places, Stronger Communities, Bringing back control
Milestones	Identify priority sites Community engagement on design Procurement Delivery

#4 Community Hubs update

Brief Description	It is recognised that community premises in Farnworth have the potential to better serve the needs of the local communities. The capability of premises across Farnworth will be assessed as will the current and potential demand for space to deliver services. Working with property owners and service deliverers the project will seek to identify an improved network of facilities that meets the community's needs. This may result in investment in some properties and repurposing others.
Primary Intervention	Regeneration, high streets and heritage – Funding for new community and neighbourhood infrastructure projects, or for improvements to existing ones, including facilities that house public services
Theme	Thriving Places, Stronger Communities
Milestones	Assess supply of community spaces Assess current provision of services Assess demand for services Agree future provision requirements with stakeholders Develop capital investment/divestment programme Source funding Agree legals Construction/Works Operational premises

#5 Harper Green Playing Fields

Brief Description	Harper Green Playing Fields are currently an underused playing field resource in need of investment. The project will develop a partnership approach to take forward the regeneration of the site as a community-led sports-based facility. It will provide accessible facilities to encourage healthy sports and social activities for all ages in Farnworth.
Primary Intervention	Health and wellbeing – Funding for local sport and activity facilities, events, teams and leagues, to foster community engagement and connection
Theme	Thriving Places, Stronger Communities, Bringing back control
Milestones	Initial Feasibility with community engagement Identify potential partners Source additional funding streams Procurement Site design/consents Construction/Works Operation

#6 Rock Hall Revival

Brief Description	Rock Hall is a Grade 2 listed building owned by Bolton Council and situated in Moses Gate Country Park, Farnworth. Rock Hall was built in 1807 by John Crompton (the proprietor of paper mills in Lancashire.) The redeveloped hall will be a significant resource for the local community and will include a café, multi-use community spaces and interpretive displays. The greenspace of the park will also be improved. The project design will be inclusive and accessible, encouraging participation from the community to engage with heritage and nature. The programme of activity has been created to reflect the need of the locality with targeted events and projects directly targeting local people from the BME population, local families on low incomes and people with SEND and additional needs. Most activities will be free and as Moses Gate Park is walkable distance from Farnworth, local families will have a great 'day out' offer.
Primary Intervention	Regeneration, high streets and heritage – Enhanced support for arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities, projects and facilities and historic institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offer
Theme	Thriving Places, Stronger Communities, Bringing back control
Milestones	Source additional funding streams Procurement Site design/consents Construction/Works Operation

#7 Bus Connectivity

Brief Description	Working with TfGM to encourage services linking Farnworth town centre and the residential areas and to improve evening and night services between Farnworth, Bolton and Manchester. The evening services will enable greater participation in evening economy activities
Primary Intervention	Transport – Funding can be used to improve Primary Intervention local bus services
Theme	Thriving Places, Stronger Communities
Milestones	Engage with TfGM Community engagement Secure external funding

#8 Walking, Wheeling, Cycling

Brief Description	This project focuses improving the local routes linking the town centre, train station, Moses Gate Country Park and Rock Hall. The routes will encourage active travel modes, walking, cycling and access for pushchair and wheelchair users, improving access to green space in relative proximity to the town centre. The new routes will need to consider connections to other existing and planned routes.
Primary Intervention	Transport – Support for active travel enhancements in the local area
Theme	Thriving Places
Milestones	Engage with TfGM Community engagement Secure external funding Design Procurement Delivery

#9 Community Engagement

Brief Description	This project will deliver a programme of continuous and meaningful engagement with Farnworth residents, community groups, schools, businesses, and underrepresented voices. Activities will include consultation events, digital platforms, neighbourhood forums, youth voice initiatives and capacity-building for grassroots groups.
Primary Intervention	Cohesion - Measures to improve community cohesion
Theme	Thriving Places, Stronger Communities, Taking Back Control
Milestones	Establishment of a community engagement framework and calendar of activities (Year 1) Launch of Farnworth-wide digital and face-to-face consultation tools (Year 1) Targeted engagement with underrepresented groups (Years 1–3) Annual “Farnworth People’s Assembly” to review progress and priorities (Years 2–10) Embedding local volunteers and community champions to sustain engagement beyond the programme (Year 4 onwards).

3. Indicative spend forecast

	Year ~2 23/24 Capacity Revenue cost Actual (£)	Year-1 24/25 Capacity Revenue cost Actual (£)	Year 0 25/26 Capacity Revenue cost Actual (£)	Year 0 25/26 Capacity Revenue cost Budget (£)	Year 1- 26/27 Capacity Revenue cost (£) Capital cost (£)			Year 2- 27/28 Capacity Revenue cost (£) Capital cost (£)			Year 3- 28/29 Capacity Revenue cost (£) Capital cost (£)			Year 4- 29/30 Capacity Revenue cost (£) Capital cost (£)			Phase 1 Total
Focus on Farnworth Plan Production		32,940	3,900	3,900													36,840
Farnworth based Town Board Secretariat		788	9,350	9,350	19,000			19,000				19,500			20,000		87,638
Bolton Council Principal Project Regeneration Officer (full-time)	6,960	36,583	33,715	49,526	62,757			65,896				69,191			72,650		363,563
Website & Brand			5,000	5,000	1,000			100				150			150		6,400
Board Development and Communications			1,463	13,500	6,000			4,500				2,000			2,000		28,000
To apply for External Business Case Funding/feasibility programmes						15,000			25,000			25,000			30,000		95,000
Development, delivery & monitoring Farnworth Fund including VCSE Sector																	
Development				25,000	57,315	19,169		50,661				52,181			53,746		258,072
Flexible Fund						20,000		20,000				30,000			32,000	20,000	122,000
#1 Farnworth Fund				10,000	100,000			100,000	100,000			120,000	100,000		150,000	100,000	780,000
#2 CCTV, Lighting & Wayfinding				4,000	37,652	100,000		7,500	362,000			7,500	300,000		7,500		826,152
#3 Play Areas in Parks				7,500		182,000			91,000				91,000			185,000	556,500
#4 Community Hubs Upgrade Programme			16,546	50,000				30,000	600,000			93,737	550,000		44,003	1,000,000	2,367,740
#5 Harper Green Playing Fields			6,300	17,000		25,000			400,000				400,000			300,000	1,142,000
#6 Rock Hall				17,000		15,000	75,000		15,000	175,000			175,000				472,000
#7 Bus Connectivity																	-
#8 Walking, Wheeling & Cycling				3,000													3,000
#9 Community Engagement		27,115		6,000	20,000			19,270	710			20,000			20,000		113,095
Total	6,960	97,426	76,274	220,776	166,072	231,821	357,000	108,766	248,871	1,728,000	-	439,259	1,616,000	-	432,050	1,605,000	7,258,000
Capacity funding (income)	50,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	150,000												600,000
Delivery Income (revenue)						232,000			256,000			432,000			432,000		1,352,000
Delivery Income (capital)							360,000			1,736,000			1,605,000			1,605,000	5,306,000
Cumulative Balance - Aavaible for new projects	43,040	145,614	269,340	124,838	108,766	179	3,000	-	7,308	11,000	-	50	-	-	0	-	0

4. Management costs

4. Management costs

Farnworth Baptist Church will provide secretariat services to the Board as follows:

Board Administration

Hiring of rooms and refreshments for Board related meetings and events

Secretarial services eg minute taking, agenda preparation, report/presentation preparation for Board meetings

Board development and training

Planning development for Board members

Communications

Website design and management

Print design and production

Social media design and management

Consultation

Development and delivery of consultation strategy covering the first four-year investment plan

Development of consultation skills within the local community

There will be regular liaison with the Council's dedicated project manager. The lead contact with regards to secretariat will be Associate Minister, Helen Bradbury.

The budget allocated for the management costs are:

- FY25/26- £9,350
- FY26/27-£19,000
- FY27/28-£19,000
- FY28/29-£19,500
- FY29/30-£20,000

4. Management costs

There will also be a **Principal Project Officer** in Bolton Council Regeneration Team

- Full time role @ £62,757 p.a. (including on-costs) with 5% annual inflation uplift assumed.

Responsibilities include:

- Supporting the establishment of the Farnworth Fund
- Community Hubs review & delivery lead including match funding
- Harper Green Playing Fields review & delivery lead including match funding
- Oversight over playgrounds upgrades
- Lobbying for active travel upgrades
- Lobbying for feasibility of new bus routes
- Monitoring and evaluation for MHCLG
- Monitoring and reporting budgets to Board

- Facilitating Grant Funding Agreements to be set up
- Facilitating any additional Council approvals
- Managing any additional business case processes
- Leading any additional consultation required

4. Management costs

Website & Brand

Dedicated website for Focus on Farnworth (not Council) with set up budget of £5,000 in Year 0, £1,000 in Year 1 and £100 p.a. ongoing to host the domain.

Advertises events, Board papers, updates on projects, connects people and managed by Farnworth Board Manager.

5. Management of funds

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Management of Funds

The Focus on Farnworth Board and Bolton Council, as the accountable body, will ensure that all funds are awarded, managed, and monitored in line with statutory and best value requirements.

Awarding and Monitoring

All funds will be held by Bolton Council, with quarterly reporting to the S151 Officer and MHCLG.

The *Farnworth Fund* will be independently managed by Bolton CVS to support VCSE projects, using transparent criteria and independent assessors.

Larger capital and Council-led projects will be managed directly by the Board, with due diligence, legal and financial oversight.

Project Selection

Investments will be identified through open Expressions of Interest, aligned with consultation priorities.

VCSE projects under £100k will be channeled through the Farnworth Fund; larger projects will follow Board approval routes.

Conflicts of interest will be managed through formal declarations and recusals.

Risk Management

A programme-wide risk register will be maintained by the Regeneration Project Manager.

Project Boards will oversee individual risks, with escalation to the main Board.

Assurance will be provided through Bolton Council's audit functions, MHCLGs checks, and the Government Internal Audit Agency.

5. Management of funds

Compliance

All projects will comply with:

- Environmental Duty
- Public Sector Equality Duty (with Equality Impact Assessments where appropriate)
- Subsidy Control Act 2022 and state aid regulations
- Public Contracts Regulations and Bolton Council procurement rules

Assurance

Delivery will follow *Managing Public Money* and Best Value principles, ensuring propriety, regularity, value for money, and feasibility. The S151 Officer will provide annual assurance statements, supported by transparent reporting on the Focus on Farnworth website.