

Waterloo Library Moves to Wootton St – Lambeth Plans 2026

News Desk 1 week ago

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Key Points

- **Lambeth Council** is proposing to relocate Waterloo Library to a temporary site on Wootton Street due to the end of its current lease at the Oasis Centre in Kennington Road.
- The new temporary location is described as a bigger and better standalone council-run library in the heart of Waterloo, with a minimum 18-month stay while a permanent site is secured.
- The council has applied for planning permission to expedite the move amid financial pressures affecting local authorities across London.
- Cllr Donatus Anyanwu, Lambeth's Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, highlighted the progression from a portacabin over a decade ago to community centre services, and now to this proposed standalone library.
- Lambeth Council operates ten libraries plus Lambeth Archives in Brixton Hill, investing £4 million annually to maintain buildings and staff them with trained librarians.
- The current site at Oasis Centre has hosted the library since 2016; Oasis is a charitable organisation aiding education, homelessness, youth justice, and human-trafficking prevention.

- Recent improvements in other Lambeth libraries include a £360,000 investment in 2025 for Stockwell's Tate South Lambeth Library, restoring Victorian features, adding new toilets, and installing heat pumps.

Waterloo (South London News) April 6, 2026 – Lambeth Council has unveiled plans to relocate Waterloo Library to a temporary site on Wootton Street, promising a larger and improved facility for the community as its current home in the Oasis Centre on Kennington Road becomes unavailable, writes Romilly Schulte in the initial coverage.



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The announcement comes amid ongoing financial challenges for the council, which is determined to safeguard essential services. This move marks a significant step in enhancing library provisions in the Waterloo area, building on years of incremental improvements.

What Is the Background of Waterloo Library's Current Location?

Waterloo Library has been situated at the Oasis Centre since 2016. The Oasis Centre is operated by a charitable organisation that delivers support in education, homelessness, youth justice, and human-trafficking prevention across local neighbourhoods in the country.

As reported by Romilly Schulte of South London News, the availability of this space has now ended, prompting the need for relocation. The council views the Oasis Centre stint as part of efforts to better meet local residents' needs following earlier temporary setups.

Why Is Lambeth Council Relocating the Library to Wootton Street?

The proposed temporary site on Wootton Street will function as a council-run standalone library in the heart of Waterloo. Lambeth Council has pledged that this location will be bigger and better, serving the community effectively for a minimum of 18 months.

The council has submitted a planning permission application to facilitate a swift transition. This interim measure allows time to identify and secure a permanent home in the area.

Cllr Donatus Anyanwu, Lambeth's Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, emphasised the evolution of services. As quoted by Romilly Schulte of South London News, Cllr Anyanwu stated:

“**Waterloo has gone from having a temporary library in a portacabin more than a decade ago, to services in a community centre to the latest proposal for a council run stand-alone library in the heart of Waterloo.**”

How Are Financial Pressures Impacting This Decision?

Lambeth Council faces

“**an incredibly difficult time financially, and for local authorities across London,**”

according to Cllr Donatus Anyanwu, as reported by Romilly Schulte of South London News. Despite these constraints, the council remains committed to protecting frontline services that residents prioritise.

The authority invests £4 million annually across its library network. This funding ensures buildings remain in top condition and are staffed by trained librarians, underscoring a dedication to quality amid budget strains.

What Is the Scale of Lambeth Council's Library Network?

Lambeth Council manages ten libraries, in addition to Lambeth Archives located in Brixton Hill. These facilities form a cornerstone of community services, with the annual £4 million investment covering maintenance and professional staffing, as detailed in coverage by Romilly Schulte of South London News.

This network reflects broader efforts to sustain cultural and educational hubs, even as individual sites like Waterloo undergo transitions.

How Does This Relocation Fit into Recent Library Improvements in Lambeth?

Libraries across Lambeth have benefited from substantial upgrades in recent years. A prime example is Stockwell's Tate South Lambeth Library, which reopened in 2025 following a £360,000 investment.

The works restored its original Victorian features, introduced new toilets, and installed heat pumps for improved efficiency. As noted by Romilly Schulte of South London News, these enhancements demonstrate the council's proactive approach to modernising its estate.

The Waterloo relocation aligns with this pattern, aiming to elevate services beyond previous temporary arrangements.

What Challenges Did Waterloo Library Face Before the Oasis Centre?

More than a decade ago, Waterloo Library operated from a portacabin, marking its earliest modern iteration. This progressed to the community centre at Oasis Centre in 2016, as outlined by Cllr Donatus Anyanwu in statements reported by Romilly Schulte of South London News.

Each phase has responded to community needs and logistical realities, culminating in the current proposal for a more robust standalone facility.

What Is Oasis Centre's Role Beyond the Library?

The Oasis Centre, run by its charitable organisation, extends far beyond library hosting. It provides vital aid in education, addressing homelessness, supporting youth justice, and preventing human trafficking in local neighbourhoods nationwide.

Since 2016, it has housed Waterloo Library as part of broader aims to enhance facilities for residents, according to details from Romilly Schulte's reporting in South London News.

How Will the Wootton Street Site Benefit the Waterloo Community?

Councillors and council statements position the Wootton Street site as a superior option—larger, standalone, and centrally located. This setup promises enhanced access and services during the 18-month minimum tenure.

Planning permission efforts signal urgency to implement quickly, minimising disruption. Cllr Anyanwu's comments, via Romilly Schulte of South London News, frame it as a progression residents will value.

What Broader Context Shapes Lambeth's Library Investments?

The £4 million annual spend across ten libraries and archives highlights strategic prioritisation. It covers upkeep and trained staff, ensuring resilience against financial headwinds affecting London councils.

Recent projects like the Tate South Lambeth refurbishment exemplify tangible outcomes, setting a benchmark for Waterloo's future.

When and How Will the Relocation Timeline Unfold?

The Wootton Street site serves as a temporary bridge for at least 18 months, during which permanent options will be pursued. The planning application accelerates this process.

No specific start date has been confirmed in available reports, but the council's determination, as voiced by Cllr Anyanwu and covered by Romilly Schulte of South London News, suggests prompt action.

Who Is Leading the Council's Response?

Clr Donatus Anyanwu, as [Cabinet](#) Member for Stronger Communities, is the key figure. His statements provide insight into both historical context and forward-looking commitments.

Additional council spokespeople have reiterated the focus on resident-valued services, per Romilly Schulte's South London News article.

What Do Recent Lambeth Library Upgrades Tell Us About Future Plans?

The 2025 reopening of Stockwell's Tate South Lambeth Library after £360,000 in works—restoring Victorian elements, adding amenities, and upgrading sustainability—signals investment continuity.

Waterloo's move fits this trajectory, potentially paving the way for similar enhancements at a permanent site.

Lambeth residents have long relied on these spaces for learning, community engagement, and support. The council's navigation of fiscal challenges while advancing facilities underscores a resilient public service model.

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