MORLEY Town Deal

News Update

Winter 2024/25

Funded by UK Government

Leeds City Council

Major milestones achieved on key projects

The Morley Adult Learning and Skills Centre, a key Morley Town Deal project being delivered in partnership with Leeds City College, received the planning go-ahead in December 2024. Planning permission for the refurbishment to Morley Town Hall is expected early in 2025.

Morley Town Hall is now closed to the public in order for the refurbishment works to start.

The Town Hall upgrades, which meet the expectations for a grade-I listed building, will include the addition of a new café and bar, upgrades to the theatrical experience in the Alexandra Hall, and improvements in building accessibility. It is expected the newly refurbished Town Hall will reopen in Summer 2026.

Planning and listed building approval has now been granted to transform the former St Mary's in the Wood church, located on Commercial Street, into an Adult Learning and Skills Centre that will serve the people of Morley and surrounding areas.

A procurement process to appoint contractors will now take place and construction on the new skills centre, which will teach a wide range of digital and IT skills to adult learners (over 18), is expected to start later in 2025.



Above: Town Hall cafe.



Above: Town Hall bar.



Above: The Town Hall public realm.



Above: CGI of the new Morley Adult Learning and Skills Centre.

IT skills offer for Morley

Morley residents will get a chance to learn some key IT skills in early 2025, through the new operator of the Adult Learning and Skills Centre, Leeds City College.



The college will be running a funded course (subject to eligibility) on Using Essential Digital / IT Skills at Crank Studios, on Beryl Burton Gardens, from Wednesday 29 January 2025.

The 9.30am to 12.30pm sessions will run over eight weeks and give people an idea of what to expect from the new Learning and Skills Centre.

The new centre will be focused on providing training to improve the skills of adults, particularly in new and emerging technologies. It will be based in the former St Mary's in the Wood church, on Commercial Street, which the council bought last year using part of the £24.3 million Morley Towns Fund grant.

Director of Adult Curriculum at Leeds City College, Jo Dye said:

"We are really looking forward to opening the new learning and skills centre and using its courses and facilities to help people of all ages maximise their potential.

"The digital and IT skills course, which we are grateful to Crank Studios for hosting, will give participants a useful little taste of what's to come and we hope lots of people will sign up for it."

To find out more on the course and book your place contact the college's Deputy Head of Vocational and Community Learning, David Stones:

david.stones@leedscitycollege.ac.uk

Morley Town Deal board welcomes four new members









Above (left to right): Mark Sewards MP, Councillor Jonathan Pryor, Councillor Helen Irving, Angela Barnicle.

The Morley Town Deal board has welcomed four new members to its bi-monthly meetings.

Following the July 2024 general election, the board was pleased to welcome the new MP for Leeds South West and Morley, Mark Sewards.

The board equally welcomed two new faces from Leeds City Council and a new member from Morley Town Council.

Councillor Jonathan Pryor joins the board in his new capacity as executive member for economy, transport, and sustainable development, taking over from his predeccessor, Councillor Helen Hayden. Angela Barnicle, Leeds City Council's new interim director of city development, replaces Martin Farrington.

Joining the board from Morley Town Council is planning and audit committee member, Councillor Helen Irving.

Morley heritage off to a flying start in 2025



Above: Morley's newly combined and enlarged conservation area



Top & bottom: Queen Street in Morley



Heritage in Morley received a significant boost to start 2025, with the adoption of a new conservation area and area management plan, the approval of the first two shopfronts, and new opportunities for owners of historic buildings.

The adoption of a newly combined and enlarged conservation area and an associated appraisal and management plan in Morley on 21st January 2025, will see historic areas of Morley protected from harmful change and encourage good quality new developments. The newly combined and enlarged area replaces the previously separate Town Centre and Dartmouth Park conservation areas.

The Heritage Investment Fund programme aims to bring vacant/unused floorspace back into use, increase heritage and cultural activities in the town, and create new jobs.

The fund consists of two different grant streams. The Heritage Shopfronts Grant and the Flexible Fund scheme.

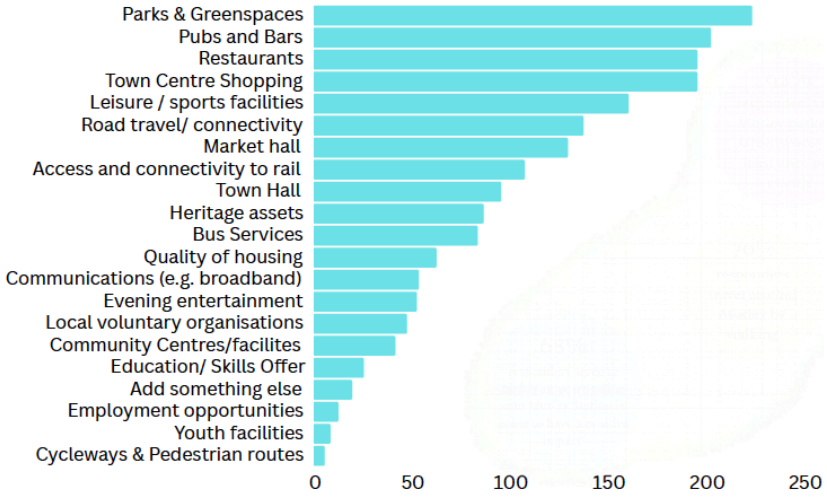
Launched in April 2024, the Shopfront Grants scheme aims to reinstate traditional shopfronts that are sympathetic to Morley's unique conservation area, and work can include external heritage improvements such as stonework. The Flexible Fund scheme, launched in December 2024, is open to potentially larger properties and can be used as part-funding for more comprehensive works.

News of the enlarged conservation area comes as the first buildings to receive grants from the Town Deal's Heritage Shopfronts grant scheme, got the go-ahead. Two properties located opposite Scatcherd Park will see investment totalling over £200k as a result of the grant funding supported by contributions from the property owners. The works, which are expected to last approximately ten weeks, include the restoration of traditional shop front designs and the re-installation of timber sash windows. The works will also include re-establishing the exterior heritage stonework and roof repairs.

Owners of historically significant properties within the new boundaries of the Morley conservation area are being encouraged to submit their interest for grant funding from the Flexible Fund scheme.

Property owners who may be interested in the Flexible Fund are asked to submit applications to the email below by 21st February 2025 in order to be considered. Funding is limited and all proposals will be assessed against the overall budget of the Heritage Investment Fund. For further information, please get in touch with our Heritage Regeneration Officer via: **morleytowndeal@leeds.gov.uk**

2024 satisfaction survey



Above: What residents like most about living in Morley.

The annual Morley Town Deal satisfaction survey has revealed that 68 per cent of Morley respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with the town as a place to live, an 11 per cent increase on 2023.

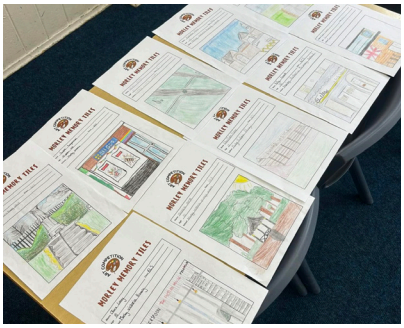
This year's satisfaction survey had an excellent response rate of 625 contributions from a wide cross section of age groups, with 68% of the responses being positive.

The survey also revealed that over 50 per cent of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied by all of the improvement the Morley Town Deal is making to the town.

60 per cent of respondents thought Morley was a safe place to visit, while 17 percent said making Morley safer was a top priority. The next annual satisfaction survey will take place in Summer 2025 so watch out for how to have your say then.

Morley primary schools competition to capture children's favourite places





Left: Councillor Jane Senior judging artwork Right: Some of the entries

An artwork competition for primary schools pupils saw favourite places in Morley captured on ceramic tiles as a part of a new urban trails project, funded by Network Rail and the Towns Fund.

Morley schools pupils were asked to draw their favourite places in the town showcasing why Morley is such a great place to live.

Thirty pictures, judged by Councillor Jane Senior, were chosen from each school. The images will now be painted on tiles, fired, and then mounted in various locations on the route to and from Morley train station, capturing the children's memories for generations to come.

Inclusive Design Panel update



Above: Ruth Gorse Academy Students on the IDP panel.

The Morley Town Deal Inclusive Design Panel has been thriving and becoming increasingly more diverse.

After the IDP presented to students at Elliot Hudson College in 2023 the panel now includes young people from the college. At each meeting the panel are presented with initial project designs, seeking their views on inclusivity and accessibility.

This year there have been several projects for the panel to be involved in, including gathering feedback on Morley Adult Learning and Skills Centre; Morley Town Hall; the Greener and Connected and the Station Gateway schemes.

The panel has raised many questions around details such as fixtures and fittings, access requirements (ramps, balustrade, steps, power assisted doors), accessible toilets, outdoor seating and event space as well as clear signage and wayfinding. The project designs have then subsequently been changed to accommodate any highlighted accessibility or inclusivity issues.

In 2025 the panel will continue to be kept updated and informed on the final project stages of the design and development before construction starts later this year.

MORLEY
Town Deal

For details and updates on all Morley Town Deal projects, visit:

morleytowndeal.commonplace.is