

**Report of Regeneration Officer**

**Report to Director of City Development**

**Date: 23 November 2020**

**Subject: Morley Town Deal Accelerated Funding**

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s): Morley North, Morley South	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary**

**1. Main issues**

- In March 2020 Executive Board took the decision to support the development of the Morley Town Investment Plan.
- On 1 July 2020 Tom Riordan, Chief Executive of Leeds City Council, received a letter from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) offering Morley a grant of £750,000 to fund capital projects that can be delivered this financial year. Funding is being allocated according to population size from the 2011 Census, using the Office for National Statistics' categorisation of small, medium and large towns. This grant will be used to support capital spend within the intervention framework as set out in the Towns Fund Further Guidance.
- Leeds City Council were given a deadline of 14 August 2020 to respond to this opportunity. The Town Deal Board project team worked with departments across the Council to identify suitable projects that could be delivered within these tight timescales. Engagement was sought with the Shadow Town Deal Board to finalise the list of projects which was submitted to MHCLG on 14 August 2020.
- The interventions identified include:
  - **Town centre public realm improvements.** Extending the partially pedestrianised zone on Queen Street by closing it to through traffic in the evenings to facilitate and encourage bars, cafes and restaurants to use the public realm both in the day time and in the evenings. At Morley Bottoms to permanently close a section of highway to traffic and repurpose the road to

- create a public plaza with street furniture, planting and new paving to support commercial businesses to operate safely
- **Parks improvements.** New toddler play area, tree planting and wider improvements to Lewisham Park plus further improvements to Scatcherd Park.
- **Cultural and public art projects.** Locally commissioned public artwork celebrating and amplifying community vision and cultural identity.

## 2. Best Council Plan Implications (click [here](#) for the latest version of the Best Council Plan)

The proposed programme of interventions in Morley to be delivered through this accelerated Towns Fund monies will enable the Council to achieve against a number of ambitions set out in the Best Council Plan

The delivery of improvements to the town's parks and green spaces will support Morley residents to *live happy, healthy, active lives*. These park improvements will be concentrated in Scatcherd and Lewisham parks. In addition the expansion of public realm in the town centre will enable incremental modal shift, improving the town's walkability and encouraging active travel.

The proposal, which includes parks and public realm improvements, as well as an underpinning cultural programme will also enable *greater access to green spaces, leisure and the arts*. The upgraded local public realm and parks will be animated through new public art, encouraging residents to re-engage with their town and to use these spaces for leisure and to experience culture.

The cultural programme of activity will be locally driven, reflect local culture and identity and will provide an opportunity for residents to engage with the town centre, with art and with the Morley Town Fund bid. This aligns with the Best Council Plan ambition to ensure that culture in Leeds can be created and enjoyed by anyone.

## 3. Resource Implications

- The project will be entirely funded through central government grant.

## Recommendations

The Director of City Development is recommended:

- a) To note the contents of this report.
- b) To approve the spend of £750,000 of grant funding on capital schemes in Morley
- c) Is asked to exempt the report from call in due to the extremely tight timescales in delivering the capital schemes within the current financial year as required by the MHCLG grant.

## 1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To report on the grant funding awarded to Leeds City Council by MHCLG of 750,000 to be spent on capital schemes in Morley

## 2. Background information

- 2.1 On 1 July 2020 Tom Riordan, Chief Executive of Leeds City Council, received a letter from MHCLG offering Morley a grant of £750,000 to fund capital projects that can be delivered this financial year. Funding is being allocated according to population size from the 2011 Census, using the Office for National Statistics' categorisation of small, medium and large towns. This grant will be used to support capital spend within the intervention framework as set out in the Towns Fund Further Guidance.
- 2.2 Leeds City Council were given a deadline of 14 August 2020 to respond to this opportunity. The Town Deal Board project team worked with departments across the Council to identify suitable projects that could be delivered within these tight timescales. Engagement was sought with the Shadow Town Deal Board to finalise the list of projects which was submitted to MHCLG on 14 August 2020.
- 2.3 Leeds City Council received confirmation that the bid was successful on 25 September 2020. All schemes are to be delivered in this financial year, by the end of March 2021. In order to benefit from this opportunity fast-paced work is required to deliver the work identified in line with the timescales set out.

## 3 Main issues

- 3.1 Leeds City Council submitted their list of accelerated funding projects to MHCLG on 14 August 2020. The interventions included in the submission were as follows:
- 3.2 **Morley High Street (Queen Street) - £275,000** Extending the partially pedestrianised zone on Queen Street by closing it to through traffic in the evenings to facilitate and encourage bars, cafes and restaurants to use the public realm both in the day time and in the evenings. Together with public realm enhancements to increase the attractiveness of the space to support the local economy and encourage people to dwell.
- 3.3 **Morley Bottoms (Queen Street) - £275,000** At Morley Bottoms to permanently close a section of highway to traffic and repurpose the road to create a public plaza with street furniture, planting and new paving to support commercial businesses to operate safely, and to enhance the environment to benefit longer term economic recovery and growth. The proposal also facilitates the provision of pedestrian crossing at busy road junctions and helps animate and enhance a key route from the train station to the high street.
- 3.4 **Scatcherd Park - £100,000** New paths, ramps, fencing, walls, bollards, handrail, signage, replanting of beds, tree planting and new flagged area. These improvements will upgrade a key community asset and enable local residents better to utilise this green space for leisure, socialising and exercising.

- 3.5 **Lewisham Park - £70,000** New toddler play area, tree planting and wider improvements to Lewisham Park. This upgraded infrastructure will provide green space to neighbouring communities, and to the wider town.
- 3.6 **Community Culture - £30,000** Locally commissioned public artwork celebrating and amplifying community vision and cultural identity. This programme of new culture in Morley will be aligned geographically with the interventions to public realm, highways and green spaces. This will also facilitate local consultation and engagement exercises that will in turn inform the broader vision and projects in the Town Investment Plan at the next stage of bidding.
- 3.7 **Total programme cost - £750,000**
- 3.8 As well as these interventions Leeds City Council is also drawing up a Town Investment Plan to be submitted by the end of January 2021 which will bid for a further approx. £25million of projects to support the economic recovery from lockdown and future resilience of Morley.

## **4 Corporate considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

- 4.1.1 Consultation has taken place with Ward Members and with the Council's Executive Member for Climate Change, Transport and Sustainable Development. Morley ward members have been consulted in depth on the pedestrianisation schemes to ensure that the design best meets the needs of the areas of intervention.
- 4.1.2 Further engagement will be undertaken with impacted shop and bar/café owners prior to the completion of the design of new public realm
- 4.1.3 Traffic Regulation Orders will be required to facilitate the two public realm projects and these will require further consultation with affected stakeholders and a statutory advertisement.
- 4.1.4 The Town Investment Plan, which will act as the bidding document for £25m of funding for regeneration in Morley, will be built upon substantial consultation and engagement at a local level. A communications and engagement agency has been procured to provide additional resource to support this activity. The funding for this commission has been provided through the Towns Fund capacity budget.
- 4.1.5 Through this communication and engagement work there has been a public consultation exercise delivered through the Commonplace online platform, where Morley residents have identified locations in Morley that would benefit from investment.
- 4.1.6 The Commonplace platform provided an online engagement tool based upon a map of Morley, which participants can place pins on to identify places of value to them and places which they are concerned about which could be priorities for Towns Fund investment. This was supported by a parallel marketing campaign, which drove traffic towards the site. Respondents were also asked some basic questions

to get an early understanding of the perception of the strengths and weaknesses of Morley, and the community's priorities for investment.

- 4.1.7 There have been 1,517 contributions to this consultation from 550 respondents and the site received 2,299 visitors.
- 4.1.8 The responses through the Commonplace process have demonstrated a high level of local support for capital interventions in Scatcherd Park, Lewisham Park, on Queen Street and at Morley Bottoms. In particular a high number of responses have raised the need for pedestrianisation at Morley Bottoms. This demonstrates that the interventions being pursued through the accelerated funding have strong local support in Morley.
- 4.1.9 In parallel 15 stakeholder and resident interviews were undertaken, following a structured interview schedule. These were undertaken via digital platforms and captured in-depth feedback on the vision and priorities for investment in Morley.
- 4.1.10 The cultural programme underpinning this proposal will act as an engagement tool, both provoking discussion and reflecting local community identity and culture. Through the second stage of the Commonplace engagement launched on 20 November, Morley residents are feeding back on themes they would like to see reflected in the artworks as well as suggesting suitable locations for the artworks. An additional £7,000 in budget may be utilised from the Towns Fund capacity budget to fund revenue costs associated with engagement

## **4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

- 4.2.1 An EDCI screening document has been conducted on the project and is attached as an appendix to this report.

## **4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan**

- 4.3.1 The proposed programme of interventions in Morley to be delivered through this accelerated Towns Fund monies will enable the Council to achieve against a number of ambitions set out in the Best Council Plan
- 4.3.2 The delivery of improvements to the town's parks and green spaces will support Morley residents to *live happy, healthy, active lives*. These park improvements will be concentrated in Scatcherd and Lewisham parks. In addition the expansion of public realm in the town centre will enable incremental modal shift, improving the town's walkability and encouraging active travel.
- 4.3.3 The proposal, which includes parks and public realm improvements, as well as an underpinning cultural programme will also enable *greater access to green spaces, leisure and the arts*. The upgraded local public realm and parks will be animated through new public art, encouraging residents to re-engage with their town and to use these spaces for leisure and to experience culture.
- 4.3.4 Significantly, in line with the Best Council Plan and the city's declaration of a climate emergency, these projects will also support the wider ambition to work towards

carbon neutrality. The incremental improvements to the town centre environment will provide a foundation for further pedestrianisation and public realm works in the future, leading to a meaningful modal shift and reducing private vehicle reliance.

4.3.5 These projects will be delivered in the context of the COVID19 pandemic and resulting economic recession. The expansion of public realm in the town centre will provide sufficient outdoor space for the retailers and hospitality sector in these areas to operate safely in line with social distancing. This will support these businesses to recover from the impacts of COVID19, as well as providing longer term sustainable resilience to the town centre economy.

4.3.6 The cultural programme of activity will be locally driven, reflect local culture and identity and will provide an opportunity for residents to engage with the town centre, with art and with the Morley Town Fund bid. This aligns with the Best Council Plan ambition to ensure that culture in Leeds can be created and enjoyed by anyone.

#### Climate Emergency

4.3.7 The projects proposed to be funded through this accelerated £750,000 of Towns Fund monies will provide a positive impact on the local environment, particularly through the following interventions:

4.3.8 Partial road closures and pedestrianisations will contribute to incentivising and enabling modal shift. While these are small scale schemes they will provide improvements to the walkability of the town, and will incrementally encourage behaviour change among residents.

4.3.9 Tree planting and improved green space will contribute to carbon sequestration and biodiversity in Morley. The scale of these improvements means that these interventions will not independently make a considerable difference to these measures, but they remain valuable. As an initial first step in advance of a larger Towns Fund bid these projects also provide a useful case study for future, more ambitious projects focused on addressing the climate emergency.

#### **4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money**

4.4.1 The schemes are estimated at £750,000, covering delivery costs and staff fees. These are broken down by project below:

	Delivery	Staff
Morley High Street	230,000	45,000
Morley Bottoms	225,000	50,000
Scatcherd Park	80,000	20,000
Lewisham Park	60,000	10,000
Community Culture	30,000	0

<b>Total</b>	<b>625,000</b>	<b>125,000</b>
--------------	----------------	----------------

4.4.2 The public realm works on the public highway will be procured through existing term contracts which have been awarded through competitive tender.

#### **4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in**

4.5.1 This is a key decision as it has a significant impact on two electoral wards.

4.5.2 This decision is recommended to be exempt from call-in due to the extremely tight timescales which require all funding to be spent and work to be completed within the current financial year. Any delay could mean that the delivery of these projects cannot be delivered within the current financial year leading to the potential loss of this grant funding.

4.5.3 There will be Traffic Regulation Orders required to deliver the two public realm schemes and these will be subject to a legal process. Highways & Transportation will deliver these TROs through their existing statutory processes.

#### **4.6 Risk management**

4.6.1 A risk register will be developed and maintained as part of the Highways project. There are no major risks currently foreseen, beyond those normally encountered when working on the public highway.

4.6.2 A separate risk register will be maintained monitoring overall risk across the project, including potential risk caused by the ongoing covid-19 pandemic potentially affecting supply chains and staff availability.

### **5 Conclusions**

5.1 This grant funding will help businesses in the centre of Morley to function commercially in the short term by better enabling a socially distanced retail and leisure environment, whilst providing a genuine longer term uplift in the quality of the town centre public realm. The interventions will also deliver high quality green space improvements adjoining the retail areas of the town centre, encouraging footfall and offering spaces for respite and well-being.

### **6 Recommendations**

6.1 The Director of City Development is recommended:

(a) To note the contents of this report.

(b) To approve the spend of £750,000 of grant funding on capital schemes in Morley

(c) To exempt the report from call in due to the extremely tight timescales in delivering the capital schemes within the current financial year as required by the MHCLG grant.

## **7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

7.1 None.

---

<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.