

GREAT YARMOUTH BOROUGH COUNCIL MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release
April 19, 2024

Progress at £17m The Place in Great Yarmouth celebrated with topping out event

Guests and stakeholders enjoyed a tour of The Place in Great Yarmouth as part of a topping out event to mark a key milestone in building work at the new £17m library and learning hub.

With the first section of the roof now complete, the event provided an opportunity to see how the ambitious regeneration project is progressing, as well as recognise the hard work of stakeholders and thank the construction team.

The top-to-bottom refurbishment of the former Palmers department store in the Market Place is hugely complex, but work is on track for completion in the first half of 2025.

The topping out ceremony saw beer - donated by Great Yarmouth brewery Lacons – poured on to the roof by the High Steward of Great Yarmouth, Henry Cator. The High Steward was assisted by East Norfolk Sixth Form students Amber Wells and Olivia Speed-Andrew, who are completing industrial placements at the building.

Speaking at the topping out, Carl Smith, leader of Great Yarmouth Borough Council, said: "The transformation of this well-loved and iconic building is a key component of our regeneration plans for the town.

"Seeing the progress that has been made as work continues towards creating a major new library and learning centre for the people of the borough is extremely inspiring. In less than a year, the doors to this amazing new facility will be open and welcoming people on to a wide range of superb courses. Our residents will also be able to enjoy a state-of-the-art new library and other facilities.

"Raising the aspirations of those in our borough via educational opportunities is absolutely vital and I'd like to thank all of our partners and the construction team at Morgan Sindall for the progress made thus far."

The £17m project is being funded via £8.1m from the Government's Town Deal, with a further £3.4m from the Future High Streets Fund. East Coast College and the University of Suffolk are contributing £3.5m and Norfolk County Council £2m.

Professor Mohammad Dastbaz, Deputy Vice-Chancellor University of Suffolk, said: "We pride ourselves on being a community impact and civic university, raising aspirations and widening access and participation in higher education.

"The Place has been all about collaboration between key stakeholders and community organisations who will benefit from a new library and a centre of high-quality learning. We are excited by the opportunity to create a vibrant learning community at The Place and to deliver skills-based courses and training programmes across a range of subjects."

Paul Padda, Principal and CEO of East Coast College, said: "East Coast College is excited to be delivering a wide range of educational disciplines to further the aspirations of all our current and future students. We very much look forward to seeing our students excel in their chosen vocations and securing high-quality jobs in the community.

"It is wonderful to see organisations coming together at The Place to create something as inspirational as this for the good of the community."

Norfolk County Council leader, Councillor Kay Mason Billig, said: "The Place will become a centrepiece of Great Yarmouth Borough Council's regeneration to create a thriving town centre in Great Yarmouth.

"Our much-loved library is relocating to become the heart of that. The library will help to create a learning hub with East Coast College and the University of Suffolk, helping local people to improve their skills."

Great Yarmouth MP Sir Brandon Lewis said: "The investment in The Place to secure the transformation of this building from the old Palmers Department store into a public library, university and learning centre has been made possible by the teamwork of GYBC, East Coast College, the University of Suffolk, Norfolk County Council and the Government to recognise the potential in investing in Great Yarmouth.

"This is an exciting time for regeneration and growth of Great Yarmouth, with The Place being one of a number of large-scale projects recently delivered. I have no doubt that this exciting new resource will play a huge part in assisting the area as it goes from strength to strength by providing excellent education and public services for local people."

Alister Broadberry, Area Director for Morgan Sindall Construction in the Eastern Counties, said: "The Place promises to be a transformational scheme for Great Yarmouth and we are privileged to be delivering further works with Great Yarmouth Borough Council in a collaborative way.

"The project team has a strong track record in the region and we are confident The Place will replicate some of our previous local successes at the Marina Centre, Middlegate Gardens, Charter Academy and North Denes Primary School and James Paget Hospital. We are committed to creating another inspiring place in Great Yarmouth that will enhance the community in which we all live, learn, work, play, care and protect."

The Place will be home to the town's public library - replacing its current location in Tolhouse Road - along with adult learning, a registry office and other community services such as Citizens Advice.

East Coast College and the University of Suffolk will offer degree and diploma courses at The Place, as well as access to higher education and adult learning courses.

As well as the completion of the first section of the roof at The Place, work is well underway on the rest of the roofing, internal structural steel, dry lining and fire

proofing. Preparation has also begun on the existing entrances in readiness for new window and door installation

As part of its commitment to sustainability, Morgan Sindall said 45 tonnes of Co2 had been saved as part of the work by rationalising the amount of steelwork used by keeping the existing structure of the building and by reducing the amount of glazed screens throughout the project so far.

As agreed under the procurement process, Morgan Sindall has also committed to reinvesting at least 30 per cent of the contract value in monetised social value within the local area. This will be achieved, in part, by making sure the majority of labour used at The Place is from within 20 miles, and that the project spend is with local small to medium-sized businesses. The company is also working with a number of students from local colleges.

The 5,300 sqm, five-storey building in the town's Market Place first opened as a drapers in 1837 and is being transformed as part of a wider ambition to locate all relevant learning and training functions in a single, high-profile building in central Great Yarmouth.