

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	29 June 2022
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Piper Alpha Memorial
REPORT NUMBER	OPE/22/139
DIRECTOR	Rob Polkinghorne
CHIEF OFFICER	Mark Reilly
REPORT AUTHOR	Steven Shaw
TERMS OF REFERENCE	Introduction 6

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the current situation regarding the Piper Alpha Memorial and the North Sea Memorial Rose Gardens at Hazlehead Park.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council:

- 2.1 Note the contents of the report; and
- 2.2 Instructs the Chief Officer - Operations and Protective Services, to connect with, meet with, and agree next steps, with all relevant parties with the outcome of the meeting to be reported back to the Operational Delivery Committee in August 2022.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 Piper Alpha was an oil production platform located in the North Sea approximately 120 miles north-east of Aberdeen. It exploded on the 6th of July 1988; 167 people lost their lives. It left just 61 survivors. It was the world's worst ever offshore disaster. Within 2 hours the Piper Alpha went from being one of the world's largest oil producers, to a burning wreckage. Lord Cullen's report published in 1990 made 106 recommendations that have changed the safety culture not just offshore, but in many other industries.
- 3.2 On 6 July 1991, on the third anniversary of the disaster, a memorial sculpture showing three oil workers was erected in the rose gardens within Hazlehead Park. The figures represent, on the West, the physical nature of offshore trades, the East, youth and eternal movement and the North holds an unwinding spiral, which represents oil, in the left hand.

The memorial was designed and sculpted by the artist Sue Jane Taylor. The memorial has the names of all 167 men who died, engraved on the pink granite plinth, alongside their ages.

- 3.3 The official brochure relating to “The Piper Alpha Memorial” was published in 1991 and limited to 3000 copies. Within the brochure, the Piper Alpha Memorial is referred to as the “memorial,” but the gardens surrounding it are referred to as “The North Sea Rose Garden.”
- 3.4 Records available to Environmental Services have the garden named the North Sea Memorial Rose Garden.
- 3.5 The name of the garden was reconfirmed in 2013, at the 25-year rededication ceremony. New ‘North Sea Memorial Rose Garden’ signs were installed at this time.
- 3.6 Aberdeen City Council own the memorial and the gardens. The maintenance of the gardens is undertaken by the Hazlehead Park team. This team is managed and supported by Environmental Services.
- 3.7 In May 2022 the Pound for Piper Memorial Trust officially announced their proposal to redesign the gardens.
- 3.8 Pound for Piper was set up in 2012. Since its inception the Trust’s main purpose has been to ensure that the Piper Alpha Memorial and the gardens are cared for and maintained to a high standard. For many years, the Trust has invested funding and their time in supporting the gardens. Aberdeen City Council have a very good relationship with the Trust and together, have always given support to ensure that the gardens are sustainable and well looked after.
- 3.9 The Pound for Piper Memorial Trust’s launched their redesign project on the 13 May 2022. The launch was about sharing a conceptual design, gathering feedback, gauging the level of support, and raising funding. The project looks to support the future of the gardens and reflects the Trust’s vision and long-term purpose to ensure that the monument and gardens are maintained to a high standard for years to come. In their own words, ‘to ensure that the gardens remain a special place for solace, comfort and contemplation.’
- 3.10 The proposal has had a great deal of media coverage. There has been support for the project, but it has also upset families affected by the disaster. The wider public has also put forward a number of comments on the redesign, both for and against it.
- 3.11 On the 6 June 2022 a petition, ‘Stop the redesign and renaming of the Piper Alpha Memorial Garden’ was received by Aberdeen City Council. The petition has over 5000 signatures.
- 3.12 The petitioners feel that there has not been full consultation on the proposed redesign and are seeking inclusive consultation prior to any decisions being taken. They request that the garden should not be renamed or rebranded as a generic monument and garden, thereby removing the strong association of the space with the disaster. They have called for the garden not to be replaced or redesigned but retained as it is and for Aberdeen City Council to maintain it to an excellent standard. They believe that the memorial and garden should be protected from redevelopment and rebranding, for example by Listed or Scheduled status. They have also called for the garden to be officially recognised as the Piper Alpha Memorial Garden.

- 3.13 The Piper Alpha Memorial and the North Sea Memorial Rose Garden are of huge significance to those affected by the Piper Alpha disaster, and to the people of Aberdeen. The Council recognises the importance of fully consulting on any proposal to ensure all voices are heard, as part of any decision-making process.
- 3.14 There has been no discussion between the Pound for Piper Memorial Trust and Aberdeen City Council on rebranding or renaming the memorial or the gardens. There has been no final decision made on the garden redesign.
- 3.15 Council Officers will meet with all relevant parties to agree a way forward and next steps. The outcome of the meeting will be reported back to the Operational Delivery Committee.
- 3.16 In due course a full report will be brought to a Council Committee to discuss the future of the gardens. As part of the formal process any proposed changes to the gardens will be subject to consultation and all relevant planning approvals. The final decision on the future of the memorial and the gardens will be made by the Council.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

7. RISK

- 7.1 The assessment of risk contained within the table below is considered to be consistent with the Council's Risk Appetite Statement.

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?

Strategic Risk	No significant risks.	NA	NA	NA
Compliance	No significant risks.	NA	NA	NA
Operational	No significant risks.	NA	NA	NA
Financial	No significant risks.	NA	NA	NA
Reputational	Communication and consultation does not include everyone with a connection to the garden.	Communication with all groups and decision-making being led by the council in all aspects of the project.	M	Yes
Environment / Climate	No significant risks.	NA	NA	NA

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
Impact of Report	
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	Supports the delivery of Aberdeen City Council Policy through the Council's commissioning intentions, aligned to the LOIP key drivers, and stretch outcomes.
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	The project would have had minimal impact on the stretch outcomes and the recommendations will have no negative impact.
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The project would have had minimal impact on the stretch outcomes and the recommendations will have no negative impact.
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	The project would have had minimal impact on the stretch outcomes and the recommendations will have no negative impact.
Regional and City Strategies	No impact identified
UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes	No impact identified

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Not required.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required.
Other	None

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

NA

11. APPENDICES

NA

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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