

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Enterprise Planning and Infrastructure
DATE	21 May 2013
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	Union Bridge
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/13/100

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is in response to the following motion raise by Councillor's Kiddie and Cormie at the meeting of Council on 1st May 2013:

“In view of recent tragedies, that Council consults the NHS, Police Scotland - Aberdeen City Division and the Samaritans and calls for a report thereafter on possible measures to prevent access to the parapet of Union Bridge, which may involve placing decorative spikes, which would in turn require consultation with Historic Scotland given the bridge's listed status.”

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

None

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

Two reports on suicide prevention measures at Union Bridge were considered by committee in 2008 on 16 April 2008 and August 2008. The outcome was the erection of signs on the bridge advertising the Samaritans. The signs were erected on 27th February 2009.

There have been a number of incidents recently that have drawn significant publicity from local media. Statistics from Police Scotland are set out below (threatening to jump or actually jumped).

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
13	14	29	17	12	15

The Choose Life Steering Group (with representatives from both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire) have been undertaking a review of incidents at Union Bridge. The most recent meeting of the Incident Review Sub Group 'Neighbourhood Issues' was on Wednesday 3rd April 2013 at which an action plan was developed and provisionally agreed.

Action Number	Task	Owner	Outcome
1	Provide constant CCTV coverage of footpath on Bridge		Police have operating procedure in place Complete
2	Replace signage on bridge		Signs replaced on 3 rd April Complete
3	Street Pastors to give location passing attention. Also agreed to explore further training for Pastors and recruit a Pastor as a Safetalk Trainer		
4	City Wardens to provide passing attention and consider scheduling static duties in the area of the bridge. Training to be arranged for city centre wardens		Met with C W on 19 th April and agreed that NM would speak informally to small groups of wardens to raise awareness of issues on the bridge and give advice on course of action to be taken in the event of someone seen in distress etc. Dates to be set.
5	Enhanced signage in the area of statue on Union Terrace junction		Met with CW on 19 th April and agreed to progress. 23 rd April advised that flower tubs are sponsored by private companies: ACC to contact them to ascertain if they have objections to Samaritans signage on bench side of tubs

			displaying their adverts.
6	Brief staff in shops opposite bridge to report persons of concern to the Police (neighbourhood watch) Consider posters etc		Consider meeting EM Community Safety Officer ACC. All shops overlooking bridge visited and advice given and material left for staff. Complete
7	Blast Adds in vicinity of bridge		
8	When operational, consider activity in area by City Ambassadors		
9	Information stand in Trinity Centre		
10	Greater use of social networks to promote Choose Life message		
11	Use existing pages on Police and ACC Facebook to promote Chose Life message		Link from Police facebook and twitter pages to Choose Life established 4 th April Complete
12	Adverts on buses		
13	Links to Samaritans etc on ACC internet pages relating to bridge		19 th April met with CW. ACC have set up a dummy site to test the concept of linking to support pages when researching Union Bridge.
14	Global text messaging		
15	Screen Projector and Safe Space Vehicle		

Police Scotland have indicated that they would prefer some form of physical barrier to be introduced (some form of catch netting to be put in place to act as a discouragement. Should such an option be considered a number of physical and relevant approvals will require to be considered as well as securing funding sources.

- How the appearance of the category B listed structure will be affected which may require Historic Scotland consent?
- How the character or Union Street will be affected?
- How Network Rail will respond?
- The ongoing management and maintenance of any proposed barrier/netting system

In order to consider all aspects and risks from the wide range of options available relevant officers from a range of services and partners would need to undertake an appraisal prior to producing a preferred option at this stage. Such a group should include Network Rail, NHS, Police Scotland and the Samaritans.

6 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Alan Robertson
Structures, Flooding and Coastal engineering Manager
alanr@aberdeencity.gov.uk
01224 (52)2419