

HM Coroner

Civic Hall
Calverley Street
Leeds LS1 1UR

Tel: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

1 August 2024

Dear Mr Longstaff

RE: REPORT TO PREVENT FUTURE DEATHS - CASE 330632 - LAURA GAWTHORPE

Further to your letter dated 2nd May, 2024 addressed to [REDACTED], I can confirm that I am the Council's Head of Service for Regulatory and City Centre Services which includes responsibility for the city's council car parks.

Thank you for sharing your report to prevent future deaths following the sad death of Laura Gawthorpe on 13th September 2022 and specifically the evidence provided by West Yorkshire Police in relation to barriers.

I have attached, for your information, a copy of our working action plan which sets out the range of measures and actions guiding our response to date and actions going forwards at [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We are committed to ensuring we do all we reasonably can to prevent further suicides.

Just by way of context, [REDACTED] was built in the 1960s, it has 1270 spaces across 18 floors. In 2008 the top levels you have referred to on your report were fenced off and following that there were no incidents for several years. The layout was reviewed again in 2013 when the car park was renovated, and no additional security features were identified. Again, there were no incidents for several years. There was extensive publicity, however, following an incident in December 2021. In retrospect we believe that this sad incident raised the profile of the building as a potential suicide site.

The city has recently launched a new Suicide Prevention Action Plan which is referenced and linked into the [REDACTED] specific action plan. We are guided by this city-wide plan which is overseen by the Leeds Suicide Prevention Strategic group in all we do in terms of suicide prevention, and specifically the actions in relation to the role of responsible communications in suicide prevention which we believe has been a key factor in this matter.

Since receiving your report we have been working very closely with a range of partners, including The Samaritans, Leeds City Council Public Health, and internal colleagues including Leeds Building Services, (our internal building services team), health and safety, communications, and our design and architecture technical consultants at Norse Consulting Ltd. to deliver a range of new prevention measures in relation to suicide at [REDACTED]. As part of our action plan, we have now finalised a technical specification for additional physical barriers at the locations you have identified on the [REDACTED] floor and throughout the car park. A significant part of the car park already has barriers which have been installed at various times since the car park was originally built. Funding for the capital works and approvals to proceed have been secured and we have received high levels of interest from potential contractors to undertake the work as part of the expression of interest stage. We are currently in the process of procuring the works through a tendering exercise within our framework contract for this type of work. A timetable for the procurement and start of works is included below:

Task/Milestone	Date
Expression of interest – market engagement	3.6.24 – 17.6.24
ATP and Governance approvals in line with CPR 3.1.7	17.6.24
Tender published on YorTender	24.6.24
Tender submission date	24.7.24
Assessment and evaluation	25.7.24 – 15.8.24
Governance and approvals	16.8.24 – 6.9.24
Contract awarded	7.9.24
Work on site begins	21.9.24

We hope that you will agree the Council has responded appropriately and responsibly to the tragic death and that the action plan devised will reduce, as far as possible, the risks of future similar deaths occurring.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if we can be of any further assistance in this matter.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Head of Regulatory and City Centre Services