

**STATEMENT TO BE MADE BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 27th SEPTEMBER 2005**

Deputy J-A. Bridge has lodged a report and proposition (P.202/2005) charging the Committee to consult with the Home Affairs and Health and Social Services Committees and erect physical barriers in multi storey car parks in order to reduce the risk of suicide. I was disappointed that the Deputy has taken this step because there is much that all three Committees are doing to reduce such suicides and attempted suicides. Most of the work is being done behind the scenes. This is a tragic issue which needs dealing with in a sensitive manner. The Deputy also expresses the hope that the proposition is not debated. I am giving this statement in the hope that the Deputy will withdraw the proposition.

I can assure the Deputy of the following facts –

The Committee will as part of any specification for new car parks include the provision of barriers on the upper levels and look at every opportunity to make the car park more secure for the general public. As far as existing car parks are concerned, the Committee has already completed the installation of barriers at Pier Road and work at Sand Street is currently being undertaken as part of the wider refurbishment project.

Quotations are being obtained from the contractor undertaking the work at Sand Street for the remaining multi storey car parks – Green Street, Minden Place and Patriotic Street and it is the Committee's intention that this remaining work will be completed by the end of the year.

The Environment and Public Services Committee and its Officers have been involved in the Suicide Prevention Strategy Steering Group since its inception in late 2002 and have carried out all recommendations made by that group which appertain to multi storey car parks. The Steering Group is a multi disciplinary agency and comprises officers from Home Affairs, Health and Social Services and Environment and Public Services Committees as well as other agencies such as the Samaritans and the Youth Service.

The £35,000 budget quoted by Deputy Bridge in her report referred to an approved allocation from the Car Park Trading Account. This money was not specifically for the erection of barriers in car parks but was to be allocated for the reduction of suicides in the Island as a whole as recommended by the Strategy Group. This was to show the commitment of the Committee to reducing suicides and attempted suicides within the Island. Unfortunately, £35,000 is not sufficient to fund barriers on all car parks.

Samaritan posters have been placed in the majority of staircases in the multi storey car parks and recent evidence from the U.K. suggests that this type of publicity significantly reduces the number of occurrences.

CCTV coverage has been improved and staff observing and patrolling car parks alerted to identify those persons who may be exhibiting behaviour indicative of a potential suicide incident.

In summary, if the objective of this proposition is to ensure barriers are being erected, I can say this is being done and I hope the work will be completed by the end of this term. The Committee is fully supportive of the Strategy Group. I hope that this information is sufficient to persuade Deputy Bridge to withdraw her report and proposition.