

Plans for visitors to be allowed to climb Forth Bridge passed on landmark's 130th birthday

March 4, 2020



Plans a Sydney Harbour Bridge-style visitor attraction on the Forth Bridge have been approved by councillors.

As part of the Network Rail plans, the public will be able to access the world-famous structure and explore its heritage as well as the outstanding views from 367 ft (110m) above sea level.

Edinburgh City Council's Development Management Sub-Committee has granted permission for the bridge walk and visitor centre.

The announcement comes as the landmark celebrates its 130th anniversary since being opened in 1890. It still holds the record as the longest cantilever bridge in the world.

It was the first major structure in Britain to be made of steel and its construction resulted in a continuous

East Coast railway route from London to Aberdeen.

The proposals will see construction of a bridge walk and reception hub on the south side of the UNESCO World Heritage site, which will be used for preparing those heading out on the bridge walk as well as providing an access point to the structure.

Groups of between 12 and 15 people will put on safety harnesses before being led out onto the bridge's south cantilever, walking up to a viewing point at the top using walkways built into the structure.

Up to three groups an hour will be permitted on the bridge, with each tour expected to last around two and a half hours.

It is estimated the bridge walk experience could attract around 85,000 visitors, bringing real benefits to the local community and creating around 35-40 jobs.

Longer-term plans to create visitor facilities at the north end of the bridge are also under development and could see future access to the top of the north cantilever, via a lift.

Alan Ross, Network Rail Scotland's director of engineering and asset management, said: "We are pleased to have secured planning consent for the project.

"The bridge walk experience will offer the public a unique and memorable visit to one of Scotland's most loved structures and bring extra tourists to the town.

"We are fully committed to working with the people of Queensferry to deliver our plans sensitively and with as little disruption as possible."

Photo credit: Network Rail