



minute
neighbourhood

Living well *locally*



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Foreword

Our city continues to be recognised as a great place to live, work and visit, yet critical issues still impact many people in our communities. Our 20-Minute Neighbourhood Strategy has been designed to help tackle the challenges of poverty, health and wellbeing inequalities, climate change and economic recovery by enabling everyone to live well locally.

The 20-minute neighbourhood concept has attracted plenty of interest around the world, but the basic approach is one that many communities already enjoy and have done for decades: ensuring services and facilities are close to residents, enabling walking, wheeling and cycling to be the natural choice for shorter journeys.

In Edinburgh, we want more convenient ways for people to get the support they need in their local area. This could mean co-locating services within our best community assets, like schools or libraries. We also want our neighbourhoods to be designed for people. Neighbourhoods where everyone can feel safe, with inclusive town and local centres and with better access to cultural experiences, greenspaces and places for recreation and socialising.

Our support for local living can give more people more choice within their neighbourhood, but it won't prevent people from travelling further to access the services and facilities they want. Engaging and collaborating with communities across the city to understand their needs will be essential.

It will not happen overnight, but if we work together then everyone can benefit from healthier, greener and thriving neighbourhoods.

Councillor Val Walker

Convener of Culture and Communities Committee

August 2023

Introduction

This Strategy sets out how the City of Edinburgh Council is working to embed the 20-minute neighbourhood concept in projects and decision-making across the city.

We will work in partnership with local communities across Edinburgh to support connected neighbourhoods that are healthier, greener, more vibrant and inclusive.

The 20-Minute Neighbourhood Strategy supports the Council's three core priorities set out in the [Business Plan 2023-2027](#):

- Create good places to live and work.
- End poverty in Edinburgh.
- Become a net zero city by 2030.

The Strategy also supports the Council's [Equality and Diversity Framework 2021-25](#) which sets out the Council's ambitions to advance equality and promote diversity.

The 20-Minute Neighbourhood Strategy was first approved in [June 2021](#). The Strategy has now been updated to be consistent with other plans and strategies and reflect the Council's current approach to implementation.

The 20-minute neighbourhood concept has been integrated into several Council plans and strategies that provide more detail about actions that will be taken forward. This will strengthen the Strategy's impact, support joint working and deliver better outcomes.

City of Edinburgh Council plans and strategies which have integrated the 20-minute neighbourhood concept:

[2030 Climate Strategy](#)

[City Plan 2030](#)

[City Mobility Plan](#)

[Community Plan 2022-2028](#)

Corporate Property Strategy

[Citywide Culture Strategy 2023-2030](#)

Digital and Smart City Strategy

[Economy Strategy](#)

[End Poverty in Edinburgh Delivery Plan 2020-30](#)

[Food Growing Strategy](#)

[Thrive Edinburgh Strategy](#)

[Thriving Greenspaces](#)

Note: table and links to be updated as required.

The 20-Minute Neighbourhood Concept

What is the 20-minute neighbourhood concept?

The 20-minute neighbourhood concept is about supporting people to live well locally. It aims to provide people with access to services and facilities to meet most daily needs within a 20-minute walk or wheel.

We are ambitious and have adopted a 20-minute round-trip principle: 10-minutes there and 10-minutes back.

However, for our existing neighbourhoods the literal definition is less important and a flexible approach to local living is needed. The distance that people are willing or able to walk or wheel will vary and there will be different needs and expectations for our urban, suburban and more rural communities.

Providing good local cycle and public transport provision for people to have the choice of accessing a wider range of services and facilities is therefore also important.

There is no template for an ideal '20-minute neighbourhood'. The services and facilities needed to meet daily needs will depend on individuals and the unique characteristics of their communities.

However, for most people these types of services and facilities would likely meet most daily needs:

- schools and lifelong learning opportunities.
- local centres, shops and employment opportunities.
- advice and support services, health and social care facilities.
- community and cultural spaces, public toilets.
- greenspaces and playgrounds, opportunities for food growth, sport and recreation facilities.
- safe, high-quality walking, wheeling and cycling networks.
- access to public transport.

The concept does not seek to restrict anyone from getting to or from other parts of the city.



Figure 1 – The 20-minute neighbourhood concept in Edinburgh

Why is this right for Edinburgh?

The [Edinburgh Poverty Commission](#) called on City of Edinburgh Council to embed a 20-minute walking or 'pram pushing' distance principle at the heart of designing all neighbourhoods in Edinburgh with consequences for planning of housing, amenity, employment, and services.

The [Edinburgh Climate Commission](#) told us that an ambitious programme of place-based investment would deliver significant social and climate benefits; reducing the need for in-city travel, maximising zero carbon design, joining up services, and improving active travel connections between places

[Thrive Edinburgh](#) tells us that health is influenced by how our surroundings make us feel, and that good places, spaces and buildings create opportunities to be more physically active; feel safe and secure, socialise and play; and connect with people.

The Local Living Framework

It is not just the physical presence of a service or facility that is important for a place to successfully function as a "20-minute neighbourhood", the quality of the place and the experience of living there is also important.

This more holistic interpretation of a successful place is reflected in the Scottish Government's [Local Living Framework](#) (Figure 2).

The Framework sets out 14 themes, derived from the [Place Standard tool](#), which are the key considerations for local living and the 20-minute neighbourhood concept.

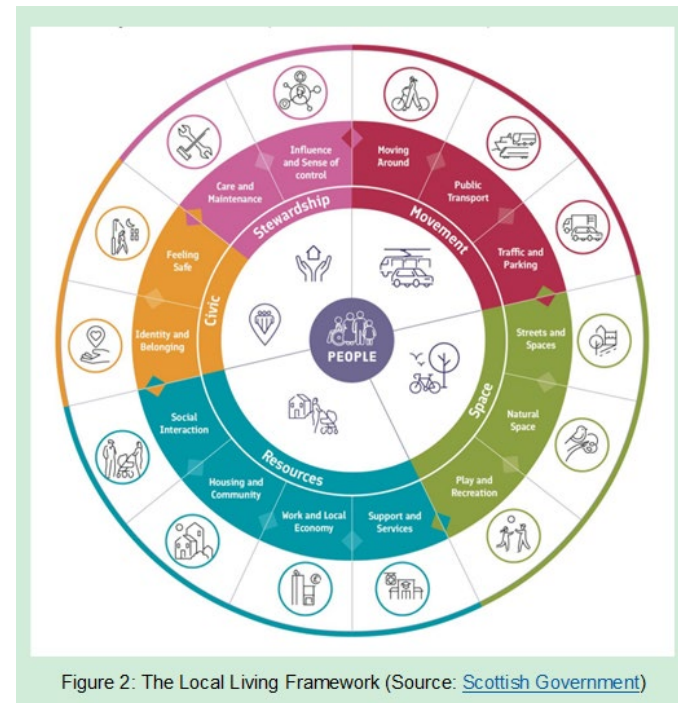


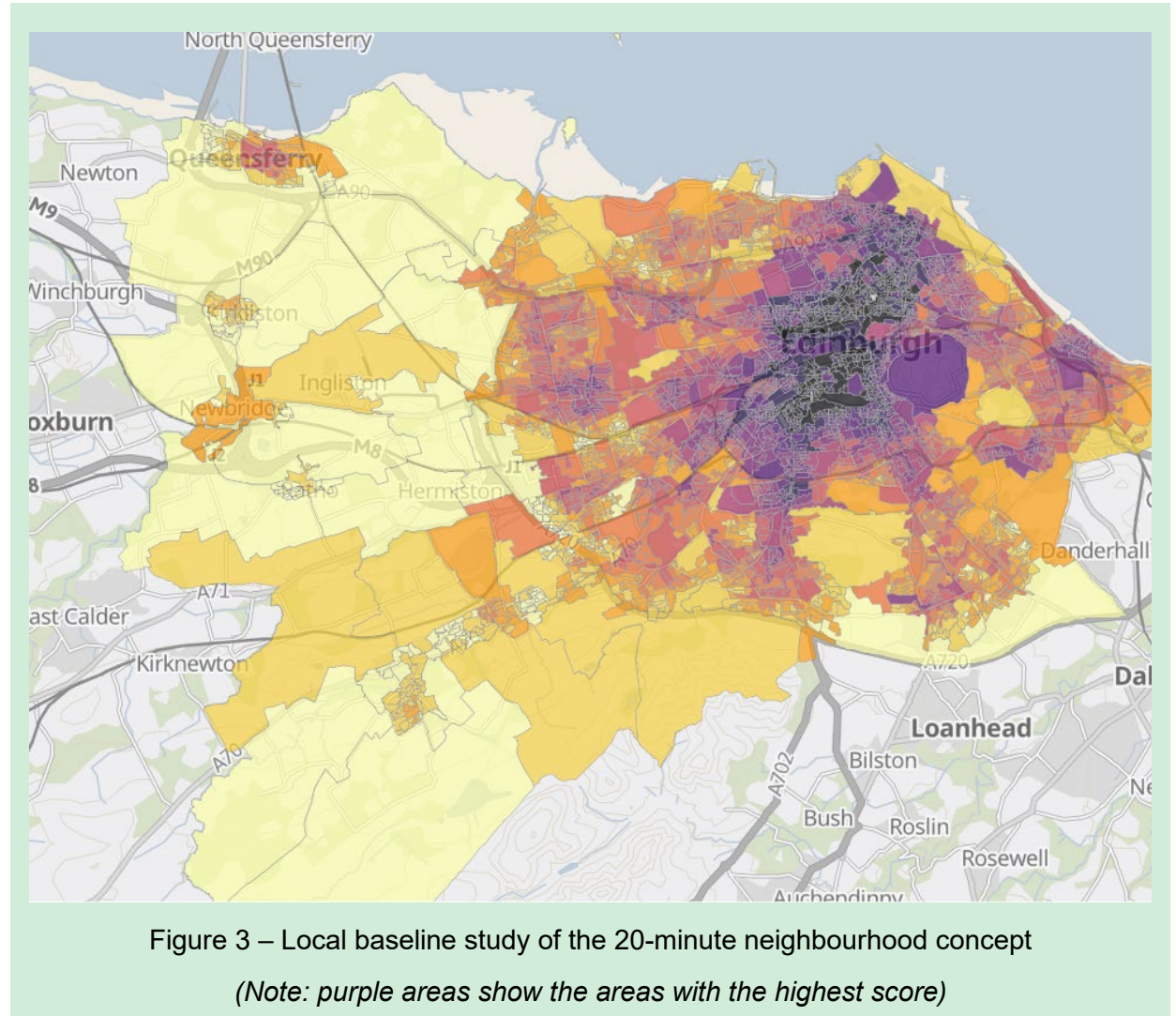
Figure 2: The Local Living Framework (Source: [Scottish Government](#))

20-Minute Neighbourhood Mapping Tool

A baseline mapping tool aligned to these 14 themes has been created to understand how well areas in Edinburgh may already be fulfilling the 20-minute neighbourhood concept (Figure 3). Purple shows the highest score, and yellow the lowest.

The tool uses the most relevant public data based on quantity features and quality indicators, to give area-based scores overall and for each of the 14 place themes. This is based on a network analysis of what is within 800 metres of the census centre points across the city.

The tool will be used as a starting point to understand the context of a place, engage with communities, and potentially assess the impacts of developments over time. This is a working tool which will improve annually as new or updated datasets become available.



Our Proposed Approach

Our approach to delivering the 20-minute neighbourhood concept will be characterised by the following key strategic actions. These are the “building blocks” for how we are going to implement the Strategy.



Working with local communities.



Supporting people to access the services they need locally.



Providing multiple services and facilities from a single location.



Delivering mixed-use regeneration and development.



Making our town and local centres greener, more inclusive and people-focused.



Supporting local economies and businesses.



Improving sustainable and active travel access to services and facilities.



Working with local communities.

People who live or work in neighbourhoods are best placed to know what is and is not working well. We want to have meaningful and ongoing community engagement so that residents are empowered to effectively shape proposals and take part in the decision-making process.

We will use community planning networks and make sure that we engage with those not normally involved in shaping their community, such as children and young people.

We will prepare guidance and support communities that want to develop a Local Place Plan (LPP). LPPs are community-led plans setting out proposals for the development and use of land, but they do not have to be long or detailed and can have a specific focus. They offer communities the opportunity to develop proposals for their local area, expressing their aspirations and ambitions for future change.

We will support new approaches to localised engagement, participation and co-design. For example, by using new versions of the Place Standard (for children and young people and with a climate lens). The use of digital technology will be used to support new ways of engagement and sharing information.

The Council will also welcome expression of interest and community asset transfer requests from local communities to improve the use and potential for buildings and land under its control.

Case Study 1: Wester Hailes Local Place Plan.

The regeneration of [Wester Hailes](#) is a key part of our plan to deliver place-based 20-minute neighbourhood improvements.

The Wester Hailes [Local Place Plan](#) was the first to be registered in Scotland. It was shaped through community and stakeholder engagement outlining how the community would like to see any future development or use of land. It also identifies proposals to tackle specific social issues that could not be addressed through the spatial proposals. 36 key projects have been proposed.

Work is underway in the area to deliver new net zero homes, improve existing homes, improve Wester Hailes High School and provide better transport connections.

Case Study 2: Portobello engagement

Involving communities at an early stage of the design project is a key priority for the 20-Minute Neighbourhood Strategy.

Early engagement was undertaken in [Portobello](#) to understand people's views on the town centre and the surrounding area. The findings are being used to inform the development of a plan to improve the area.

The engagement included an online survey, workshops based on the Place Standard, sessions with community groups and an on-street drop-in stand. Workshops were also held with children from the local school.



Supporting people to access the services they need locally.

We want citizens to build trusted relationships with the services they rely on in the places they live. The process must be led by the needs of residents and a new prevention-focused way of working.

By working with communities to look together at their local area, we can identify the types of service and amenities that are missing. We can then set out to improve the day-to-day experience of people seeking support. We will make sure residents of Edinburgh are supported and empowered to participate in the definition, design and delivery of their public services.

We want there to be 'no wrong door' for people to get support in their local area, while making sure there are links to a wider network of services across the city. Success will require changes in how our services are accessed, organised, delivered and experienced, and how we work with partners. We are committed to working with our community planning partners through the [Edinburgh Partnership](#) - including community groups and community councils, public, private, and third sector organisations.

The delivery of the [Digital and Smart City Strategy](#) will support new ways of working and make it easier for everyone to access services online. Digital inclusion is important to make sure citizens can access these services. Our local community spaces and libraries will provide people access to resources and learning opportunities to further their digital skills.

Case Study 3: Warm and Welcoming Spaces

A network of Warm and Welcoming Spaces has provided over 60 locations across the city where people can connect with others, learn new skills and relax.

Council venues such as libraries, community centres, museums and galleries (alongside partner and community spaces) have been used to provide free activities for a variety of age groups in places where people feel safe, warm and at ease.

In certain spaces residents were also able to access information to help alleviate food/fuel poverty and other support available to them.

Case Study 4: Citizen Space

The Council's customer teams provide an important point of contact for residents looking to access Council services. Locality offices continue to offer an essential route for those seeking help and support.

A trial community contact project which aimed to make it easier for people who do not live close to a locality office to reach the services and support that the Council offers was initiated in Gorgie Dalry.

[Citizen Space](#) at the community wing within Tynecastle High School enabled residents to access Council services - from reporting local issues to advice on things like housing, neighbourhood disputes or debt - in a convenient local setting.

The pilot will be used to inform future initiatives to bring services closer to the people that need them.



Providing multiple services and facilities from a single location.

The Council estate includes many buildings and spaces that can provide the services and facilities that people need easy access to, but the right services should be in the right places at the right times.

By building on models of shared service delivery and encouraging co-location, we can provide multiple services and facilities in one place. This ‘hub’ approach could improve local access to quality services and facilities, supporting the 20-minute neighbourhood concept. The services and facilities provided will vary according to the needs of the community but could include lifelong learning; social and recreation; customer and support; and administrative services.

Any new property infrastructure investment will be designed and implemented based on this approach and deliver more inclusive and accessible buildings. In some cases, services and amenities will be shared between different neighbourhoods.

The Corporate Property Strategy will further set out how the 20-minute neighbourhood concept of ‘living well locally’ will apply to our properties.

This approach may result in asset rationalisation - where appropriate - to help fund changes, deliver a fit for purpose property estate and to reduce our carbon footprint.

Case Study 5: Currie Community High School

The new [Currie Community High School](#) is part of the first phase of the Scottish Government's Learning Estate Investment Programme.

It will bring daily services together for everyone to help create a more social, inclusive and accessible community that is connected by safe active travel routes.

The new building will offer community daytime, evening and weekend access to an intergenerational community hub. Visitors will be able to use the shared service delivery space in the foyer, access meeting rooms and digital services, visit the café, keep healthy at the gym and pool or enjoy a walk around the grounds.

The campus will be one of the first Passivhaus-designed high schools in the country, setting the standard for energy consumption across school estates, and is expected to open in 2025.





Delivering mixed-use regeneration and development.

The [Proposed City Plan 2030](#) supports the delivery of 20-minute walkable neighbourhoods and embedding a 'place-based' approach to the creation of high quality, high density, mixed-use and walkable communities. Regeneration or development schemes should make sure there is good access to key community facilities.

The Council will support the preparation of place briefs and masterplans to make sure that the 20-minute neighbourhood concept is integrated into the development of key sites. For example, the [Draft West Edinburgh Placemaking Framework and Masterplan](#) supports a housing led mixed-use development in line with the 20-minute neighbourhood concept.

The 20-minute neighbourhood concept will also be embedded within the Council's housing-led mixed use regeneration schemes. This is already happening for several major housing-led schemes, such as at Muirhouse/Pennywell, Granton, Wester Hailes, Craigmillar, Fountainbridge, Meadowbank and Powderhall.

Case Study 6: Granton Waterfront

The £1.3bn regeneration of [Granton Waterfront](#) is delivering an ambitious new connected and sustainable coastal town.

The neighbourhood includes around 3,500 new net zero carbon homes (over 35% of them affordable), a primary school, commercial, community and cultural spaces, and a new coastal park.

The plans include new integrated active travel and public transport infrastructure which include 10km of new and improved cycle paths and a mobility hub. This will link new and existing communities - not only with each other, but with the rest of the city and provide improved access to open and green space, arts, sports and culture.





Making our town and local centres greener, more inclusive and people-focused.

Our town and local centres are at the heart of densely occupied areas and have many of the services and facilities that meet daily needs, but they are often built around busy main roads with compromised and cramped public spaces which make them difficult to access and spend time.

The City Mobility Plan (Policy Measure PLACE 4 – Liveable Places) aims for each of Edinburgh’s town centres to have a plan to reduce car dependency, promote active travel, and increase the quality of public space – to make them more ‘liveable’. [Public Street Life Assessments](#) have already considered how Edinburgh’s town centres can be improved.

Opportunities to create safer and inclusive spaces for women will be identified, with suggestions from the [Women’s Safety in Public Places](#) engagement incorporated into plans where possible.

Ways to bring culture, play, nature and biodiversity into everyday neighbourhood spaces should also be considered. For example, well-designed planting and sustainable drainage features in our streets can create positive change for people and wildlife and support the Council’s [Vision for Water Management](#) and green blue network project.

The Council’s [Culture Strategy](#) aims for all residents to be able to easily access cultural experiences that they find meaningful in their local area. Initiatives like the [Travelling Gallery](#) can support this aim.

Case Study 7: Pennywell Macmillan Hub

Regeneration in Pennywell has delivered a new school, medical centre, retail centre, improved public realm and new homes.

A new [Community Hub](#) at Macmillan Square will feature an early years centre, a library, skills hub, affordable homes and an expanded North Edinburgh Arts facility. The hub will include dedicated space for young people, an expanded café and shared atrium.

All staff operating from the space will follow a ‘No Wrong Door’ approach to make sure citizens can access relevant services in the space or be signposted where necessary. The hub will promote culture, learning, work and well-being for the local community in a welcoming and professional space.

New [active travel links](#) to the hub and local centre are also proposed, with integrated green spaces and areas for socialising. This will make it easier to access the services and facilities and create a more pleasant place to live and visit.





Supporting local economies and businesses.

The [Economy Strategy](#) identifies the 20-minute neighbourhood concept as a way of supporting local economies and businesses to provide for the daily needs of their communities and create local jobs. The Strategy also aims to promote community wealth building practices.

We are fortunate to have a thriving community of independent businesses in Edinburgh. High-performing local businesses are at the centre of neighbourhoods and our town and local centres. Businesses need a safe and high-quality environment for their customers and support to thrive and grow. Making sure the voice of business is heard in this programme will be a key to success.

We want to work with local networks to improve trading conditions for local businesses, recognising the constraints and pressures they work under. We will explore how business advice and employability services could be provided in local areas, allowing for people to access face-to-face support while encouraging opportunities for both local enterprise and employment.

The Council's [Tourism Strategy](#) also supports local economies and businesses. It recommends that Edinburgh's tourism footprint should be extended into local neighbourhoods, in a way that is carefully managed and reflects the needs of that specific locality.

Case Study 8: Powderhall

The strategy for the [redevelopment](#) of the former Powderhall Waste Transfer Station was originally proposed as an open market sale. However, this evolved into a Council-led major mixed-use regeneration project as it could support several priorities.

The regeneration will deliver around 260 homes; a nursery; new civic and green space; and improvements to St Mark's Path.

The adjacent [Powderhall Stables](#) will be refurbished into studios and flexible spaces for small businesses, supporting local jobs.

The aim is for the development to achieve net zero carbon standards with the stable block heated using air source heat pumps.





Improving sustainable and active travel access to services and facilities.

People should be able to easily access the services and facilities they value and need to meet most daily needs by walking, wheeling, cycling or using public transport. Through the delivery of the [City Mobility Plan](#) we will provide more sustainable and active travel networks to support the 20-minute neighbourhood concept, making it easier for people to access a range of services and facilities such as shops, schools and greenspaces.

Provision of 'mobility hubs', offering a range of shared, active and public transport options in one place, is a key part of our approach so that onward travel to other parts of the city can be undertaken in a sustainable way and deliver reductions in fuel costs and carbon emissions.

Case Study 9: Craigmillar and Niddrie

The regeneration of Craigmillar has delivered new housing, shops and a locality office. The new secondary school, which opened in 2022, is at the heart of the local centre and includes community facilities.

'Walk-Up Avenue' is a multi-use, community based public space that was delivered on a central brownfield site, providing commercial and outdoor meeting space; informal play and events space; a stage pavilion and sculptural entranceway.

Work to regenerate the area is continuing with a plan to reimagine Niddrie Mains Road as an inclusive, green and vibrant space in development with improved active travel routes that connect the local centre, schools and greenspaces.



Delivering the strategy

The good news is that Edinburgh is not starting from scratch. Many people will already think that they live in a “20-minute neighbourhood” and the case studies demonstrate that we are already making progress.

Our approach to delivery will build on existing good work and identify new opportunities to support inclusive, safe, resilient and connected neighbourhoods with cohesive communities.

For some neighbourhoods, improvements will be incremental and delivered through a long-term and ongoing process of change. For other neighbourhoods there will be opportunities to accelerate progress. This will require all parts of the Council and partners to embed the 20-minute neighbourhood concept within their day-to-day activity and investment decisions.

This section sets out the delivery considerations which will guide how we take forward a practical programme of work.

Delivery Steps

The starting point for any project aligned with the Strategy will be to understand the context of the area, by gathering relevant data and information. This will **inform** the discussion about what can be achieved.

Then we will **engage** with local communities to understand their needs and to make sure their views shape the neighbourhood approach.

We will **reflect** on what we have heard with our public, voluntary and private sector partners, to help identify ways to make initial proposals better and make sure the consultation process is inclusive and well communicated to all stakeholders.

Finally, we will seek to **deliver** change for the better in a neighbourhood which meets the needs and expectations of residents and businesses.

Progress on individual projects will be reported in detail to the relevant Committee at the appropriate time.

Appropriate consultation and engagement will be undertaken for individual projects, and this will be carried out in line with the Council’s [Engagement and Consultation Policy](#).

Working with our Partners

For us to truly transform how residents can access services locally, this strategy must go beyond the role of the Council.

Through the Edinburgh Partnership we are committed to working with our community planning partners – including community groups and community councils, public, private, and third sector organisations – across the city to deliver the outcomes and goals we all share. This can only be achieved when we work together.

The Edinburgh Partnership [Community Plan 2022- 2028](#) describes the framework for that joint working and how the 20-minute neighbourhood concept can improve the lives of communities within their immediate local area through cross-sectoral working and shared service delivery. A priority workstream of the Community Plan is ‘A Good Place to Live’, which has significant crossover with the 20-Minute Neighbourhood Strategy and opportunities for joint working will be explored.

Phasing the Programme

To help us take a more co-ordinated approach, we have identified priority areas for focus. These are town centres, areas that have a lower score on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) and more rural areas. These 19 areas of focus are shown below.

Town centres are often in high density areas and provide many of the essential facilities and services that people need easy access to. A focus on town centres aligns with the Scottish Government’s Town Centre First policy. Edinburgh’s town centres are Gorgie/Dalry, Portobello, Morningside/Bruntsfield, Corstorphine, Leith, Stockbridge, Tollcross and Nicolson Street.

Wester Hailes, Craigmillar/Bingham, Muirhouse, Granton, Lochend/Restalrig, Moredun/Gilmerton, Oxbgangs have also been identified as focus areas as they are lower scoring on the SIMD and there will be opportunities to align with regeneration work.

The more rural areas of Queensferry, Kirkliston, Ratho and Balerno/Currie have also been identified due to the potential impact that the 20-minute neighbourhood concept could have in reducing longer distance journeys.

It is acknowledged, however, that all parts of the city could benefit from the 20-minute neighbourhood concept and it should therefore be embedded in projects across all parts of Edinburgh where appropriate and as opportunities arise.

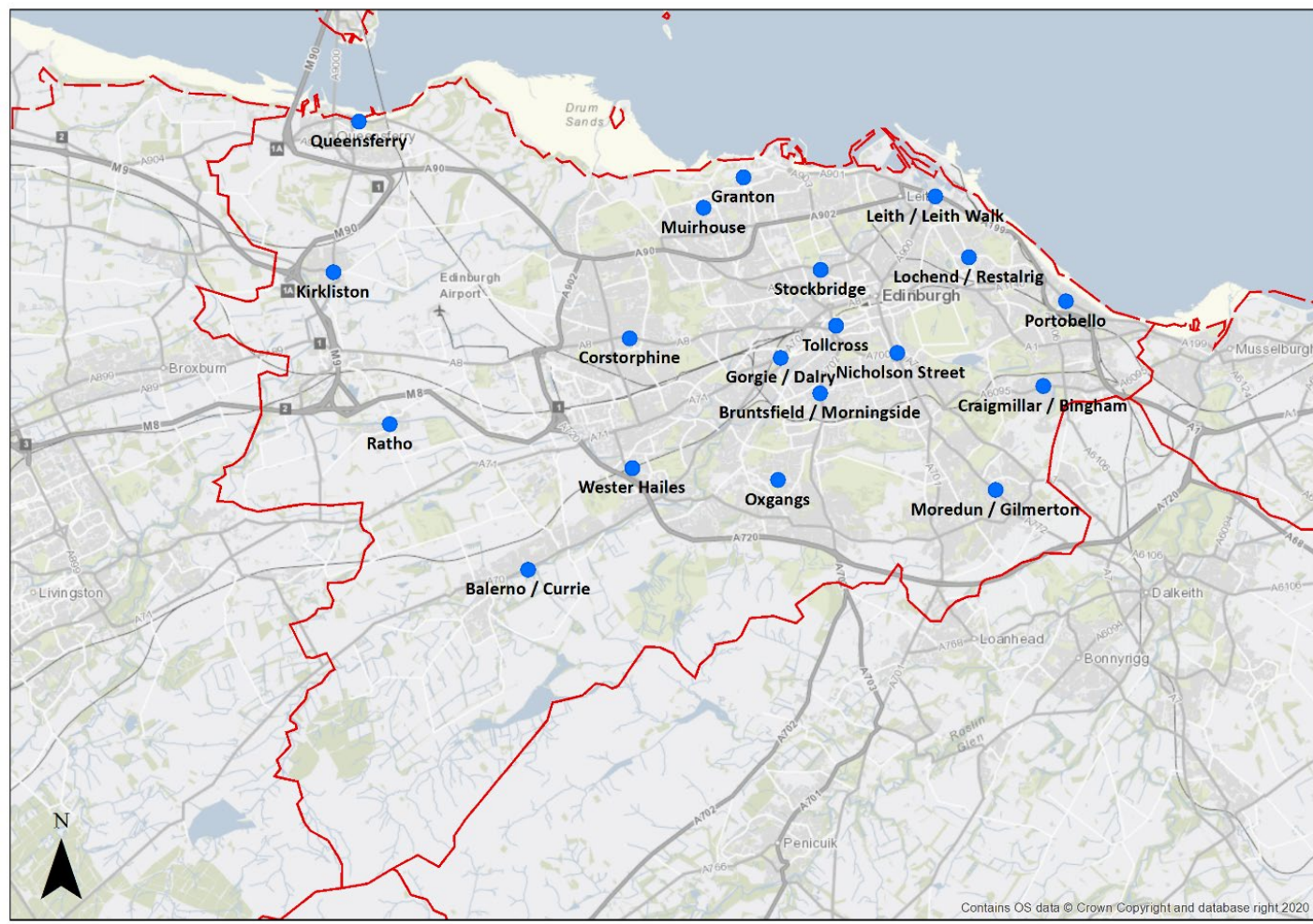


Figure 4 – Areas of focus

Governance and Resources

A 20-minute neighbourhood Programme Delivery Board will oversee implementation of the Strategy. This includes representatives from across the Council as well as partners such as the NHS.

A multi-disciplinary 20-minute neighbourhood programme team is also in place to take forward key projects and support other Council services to embed the concept within projects.

Funding will be supplemented by resources in service areas where the 20-minute neighbourhood concept has been adopted as business as usual.

Delivery of place-based regeneration is funded from the Council's HRA and General Fund capital programmes; supported by Scottish Government grant funding.

As new projects come forward, opportunities to collaborate and work across Council services and with partners will be capitalised to get best value from available funding and to deliver integrated outcomes. For example, town centre public realm improvements aligned with road renewals.

Additional funding will be required to deliver further transformative change. External funding is likely to be available. The Scottish Government's [Place Based Investment Programme](#), [Regeneration Capital Grant Fund](#) or [Sustrans Places for Everyone](#) are funding opportunities which have objectives aligned with the 20-Minute Neighbourhood Strategy.

Monitoring Progress

The case studies show how the Council has already delivered projects which embed the 20-minute neighbourhood concept. However, there is more to do.

Progress on key projects aligned to the 20-minute neighbourhood concept will be reported as part of future Strategy updates.

The forthcoming Edinburgh Partnership Survey will help us to understand how people view their local neighbourhood over time. Consideration will also be given to how the baseline mapping can be used to track improvements in local areas.