

# Seafield Place Brief

CONSULTATION DRAFT  
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# CONTENTS

## 1. INTRODUCTION ..... 3

1.1 Purpose..... 3

1.2 Process ..... 3

## 2. SITE & CONTEXT ..... 4

2.1 Existing Site ..... 4

2.2 Site Context ..... 5

2.3 History & Heritage ..... 8

2.4 Land Ownership & Uses..... 10

2.5 Access & Movement..... 11

2.6 Green & Open Spaces..... 13

2.7 Biodiversity..... 15

2.8 Views ..... 16

2.9 Topography..... 17

2.10 Flood Risk & Coastal Erosion..... 18

2.11 Social & Experiential ..... 19

## 3. VISION ..... 21

3.1 Vision Outline..... 21

3.2 Vision Diagram..... 22

3.3 Design Principles..... 23

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 PURPOSE

Seafield is highlighted in the Edinburgh City Plan 2030 as a key site for delivering on the aims for Edinburgh set out in the City Plan. Place Policy 15 outlines Seafield as a place for a housing-led mixed use urban extension with a sense of community that can connect with neighbouring areas and the wider city.

It is important that any development in the area is carefully considered. The Seafield Place Brief is a set of principles that express the vision for the development of the area. It is informed by an assessment of the site context and local community aspirations for the area.

The Place Brief is non-statutory planning guidance. The principles set out in the Place Brief will inform future master planning. Future proposals in the Seafield area should follow the Place Brief. It will be a material consideration in determining future applications in the area.

## 1.2 PROCESS

The City of Edinburgh Council appointed 7N Architects to progress a masterplan for Seafield. This process has also informed the development of the Place Brief.

The Council is committed to working in partnership with the local community to deliver the Place Brief and Masterplan for Seafield. A project team has been formed and is responsible for progressing the delivery of the Masterplan.

The Council formed a Steering Group to guide the development of the project with representatives from four of the surrounding Community Councils:

- Craigentiny and Meadowbank Community Council
- Leith Links Community Council
- Leith Harbour/Newhaven Community Council.
- Portobello Community Council

In addition, a Sounding Board was established for the Masterplan which brings together major landowners and developers with ward councillors, community councillors, and other representatives of the people of Seafield. This governance structure seeks to ensure that the Seafield Masterplan and Place Brief reflects the aspirations and ambitions of the local community.

Community engagement has also taken place in two stages to date:

- **Stage 1 - April - June 2023.** This engagement focused on the community's views of Seafield and what kind of place it should be in the future.
- **Stage 2 - June - July 2024.** This engagement focused on the priorities for the Seafield area and the ideas and proposals to achieve those priorities.

# 2. SITE & CONTEXT

## 2.1 EXISTING SITE

The City of Edinburgh Council has identified Seafield as a potential site for housing-led redevelopment. The Council have included the site in City Plan 2030.

The land identified in the masterplan covers approximately 36 hectares. This matches the allocation in City Plan 2030, with the additional inclusion of the Edinburgh Dog and Cat Home, at the request of the site owners, and the exclusion of Meadows Yard Nature Reserve, as this is a natural asset that the Council wants to protect.

The eastern edge follows the line of the coast between Portobello and Seafield Waste Water Treatment Works. Most of this is the Seafield Promenade.

The south-western edge follows the railway line until the railway line passes under Fillyside Road. The north-western edge follows Seafield Recreation Ground and the outline of the Seafield retail park.





## 2.2 SITE CONTEXT

Seafield relates to the following communities:

- Craigentinny & Meadowbank
- Portobello
- Leith Links
- Leith Harbour / Newhaven

Redevelopment of the site would improve connections between these areas. It would also improve the links that these areas have with the coastline.

The site is part of the Edinburgh Promenade. This is a continuous walkway that runs between Joppa in the east to Cramond in the west.



*Map of community councils around Seafield*

## Craigentenny & Meadowbank



Craigentenny is west of Seafield. It is an area of mostly low density housing. There are also local services including a school, community centre and shops. The area benefits from existing greenspace including a nature reserve, recreation ground and golf course.

Meadowbank is located to the south-west of Craigentenny and includes further housing, a shopping park and several sports facilities.

Currently Seafield Road and the railway act as barriers between Craigentenny & Meadowbank and the waterfront. The development of Seafield is an opportunity to create safe links to the waterfront.

## Portobello



Portobello is located to the south of the site. Originally an 18th century village, that later became a small town, before Edinburgh expanded to include the area.

Portobello has a popular beach and promenade. Seafield is connected to the town centre both by road and the promenade.

## Leith



Leith is located to the north of the site and benefits from a strong industrial heritage due to the historic dock.

The southern part of Leith surrounds Leith Links park.

The northern part is next to the historic docks and quays of the Port of Leith.

Leith Walk is a significant shopping street and transport connection to Edinburgh city centre.



## Port of Leith



The Port of Leith is Scotland's largest enclosed deep-water port. It is operated by Forth Ports. A renewable energy hub is being constructed at the port as part of the Forth Green Freeport initiative.<sup>1</sup>

The Port of Leith has both rail and road links that run across the Seafeld site.

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**1 'Work under way to create new riverside renewables berth at Port of Leith', Forth Ports, May 2023**

## Waste Water Treatment Works



Seafeld Waste Water Treatment Works is the largest in Scotland. It is operated by Scottish Water and Veolia. It is an important part of the waste water infrastructure in Scotland. It is also a net exporter of energy and produces enough surplus renewable electricity to power 800 homes a day.

Between 2022 and 2024 Scottish Water and Veolia are investing over £10 million to add additional capacity and address concerns around odour from the site.

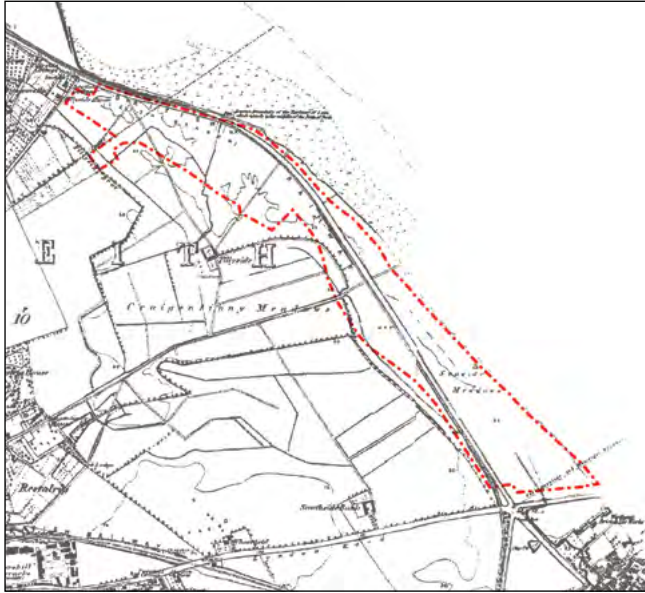
Scottish Water has also committed to developing a new facility to replace the Seafeld facility after 2030.<sup>2</sup>

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**2 'Investing in the future of Seafeld Wastewater Treatment Works', Scottish Water, June 2022**

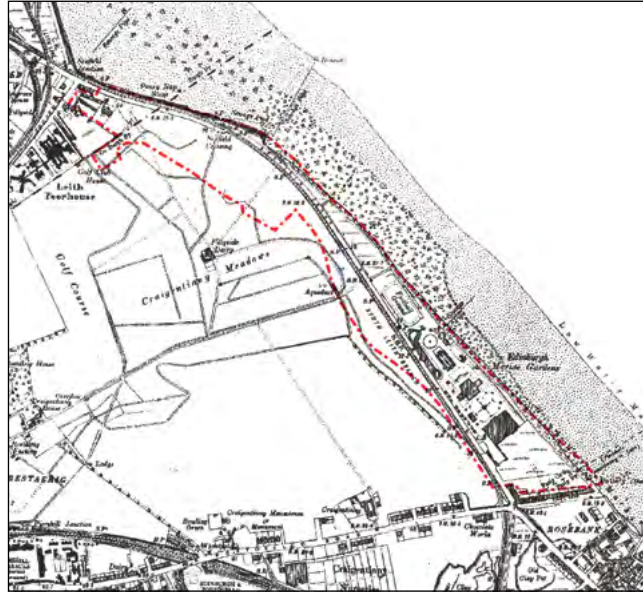
## 2.3 HISTORY & HERITAGE

### Mid 19th Century



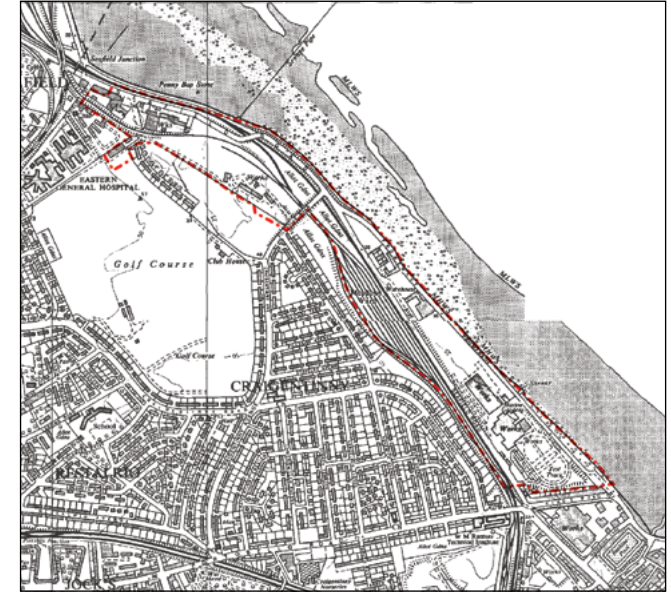
In the 19th century the site was part of Craigentiny Meadows. This was surrounded by the historic settlements of Leith, Portobello and Restalrig.

### Early 20th Century



During the first half of the 20th century the Edinburgh Marine Gardens were located on the south-east of the site, while the north-west of the site contained the Meadows Yard rail sidings. During this time, Craigentiny was developed into a residential area to the south-west of the site.

### Late 20th Century



The later part of the 20th century saw the Seafield site redeveloped for industrial, storage and transport uses.



## Statutory Heritage Assets

The northern extents of the site are close to the Leith and Portobello conservation areas, respectively. There are no listed buildings within the site area. There are two listed buildings on Seafield Street adjacent to the very north-western corner of the site. The Category B listed Fillside House and the Category C listed Chapel of the Eastern General Hospital.



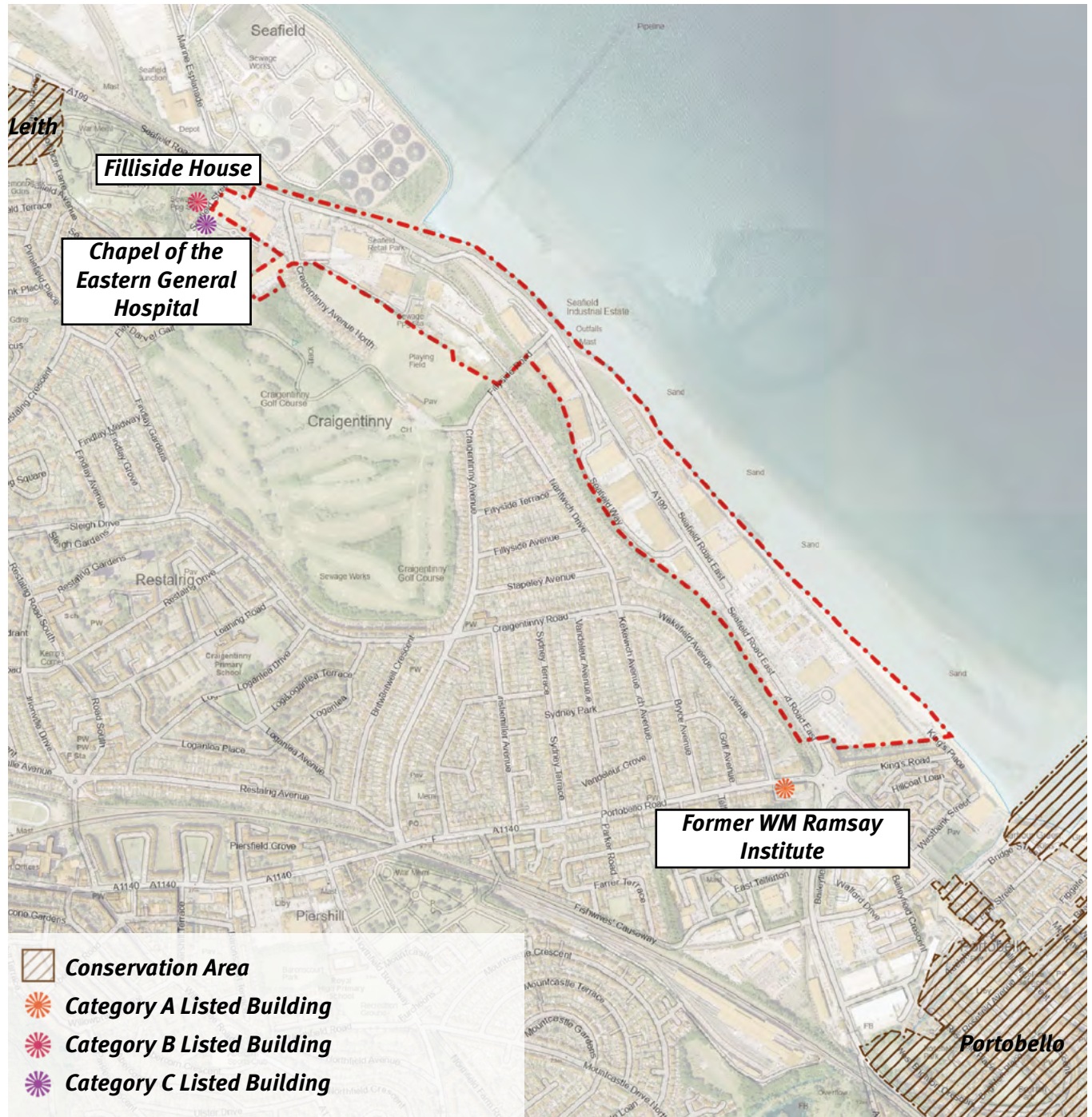
**Former WM Ramsay Institute (Cat A)**



**Fillside House (Cat B)**



**Chapel of the Eastern General Hospital (Cat C)**



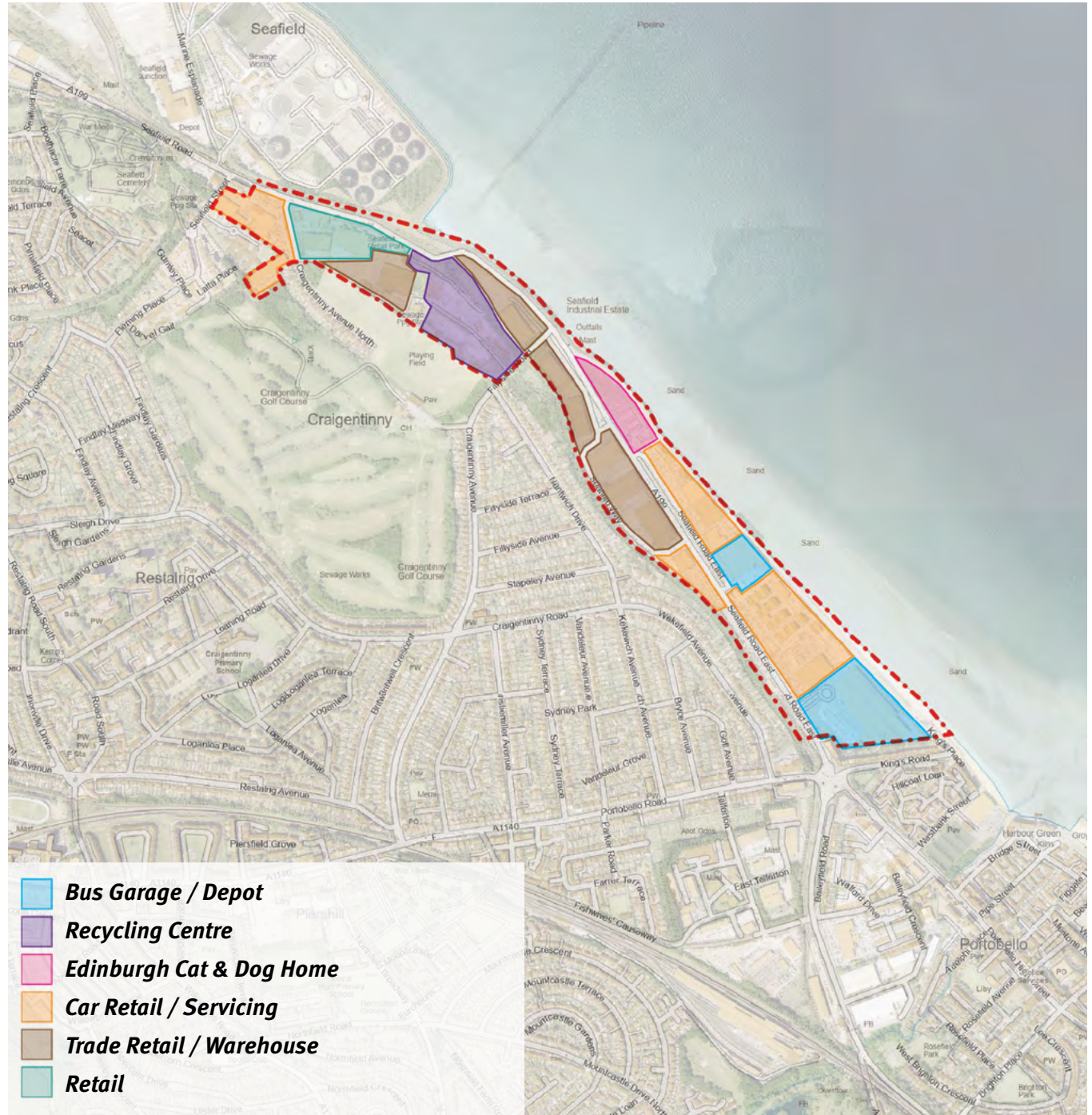


## 2.4 LAND OWNERSHIP & USES

The land at Seafield is primarily privately owned. The current uses are mainly car showrooms. To the north-west are several large retail units, mostly providing building materials, and the Seafield Household Waste Recycling Centre. The recycling centre is located on council land. To the south-east is the Lothian Buses Marine Depot. Lothian Buses also own a Coach Works site in the middle of the site. Some of the retail units in the area are vacant. There are no homes currently on the site.



Photo of current site uses





## 2.5 ACCESS & MOVEMENT

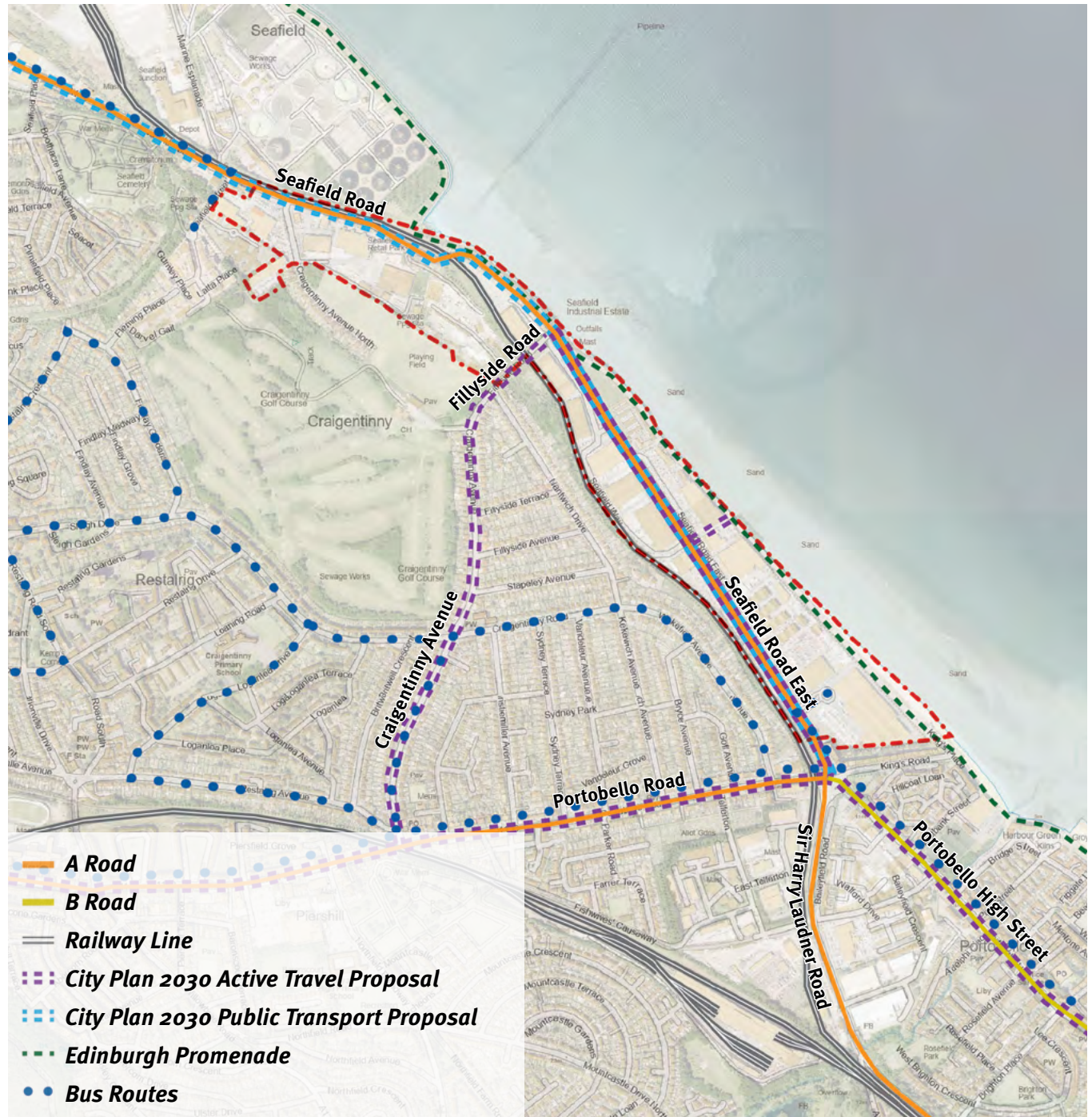
### Existing Travel

The dominant access route across the site is Seafield Road / Seafield Road East. This is a wide and busy road that runs between Leith and the complex Sir Harry Lauder Road junction at the north-west of Portobello. There is a junction along Seafield Road that connects to Fillyside Road and leads to Craigentenny. There are few pedestrian crossings, and the road is an intimidating environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

There is an active travel route that runs along the promenade for two-thirds of the site. This is a popular and well-used route but is in poor condition with inadequate signage and lighting.

Buses currently stop at the top of the site at Seafield Street and at the bottom at Inchview Terrace, with no route running along Seafield Road East.

A railway line runs along the south-west edge of the site. This connects to the Port of Leith and is currently safeguarded for freight use.





## Strategic Travel Improvements

The Edinburgh City Plan 2030 includes the following proposals that relate to the Seafield area:

- Improve the active travel routes and connections along Seafield Road, Portobello High Street, Fillyside Road, Craigentiny Avenue and Portobello/ London Road,
- Improve crossing and connections at Sir Harry Lauder Road junction.
- Upgrade the Edinburgh Promenade at Seafield and provide safe connections and safe crossing of Seafield Road East
- Extend public transport connections across Seafield between Portobello and Leith.
- Provide a mobility hub.



*Seafield Road East*



*Fillyside Road*



*Sir Harry Lauder Road Junction*



*Seafield Promenade*



## 2.6 GREEN & OPEN SPACES

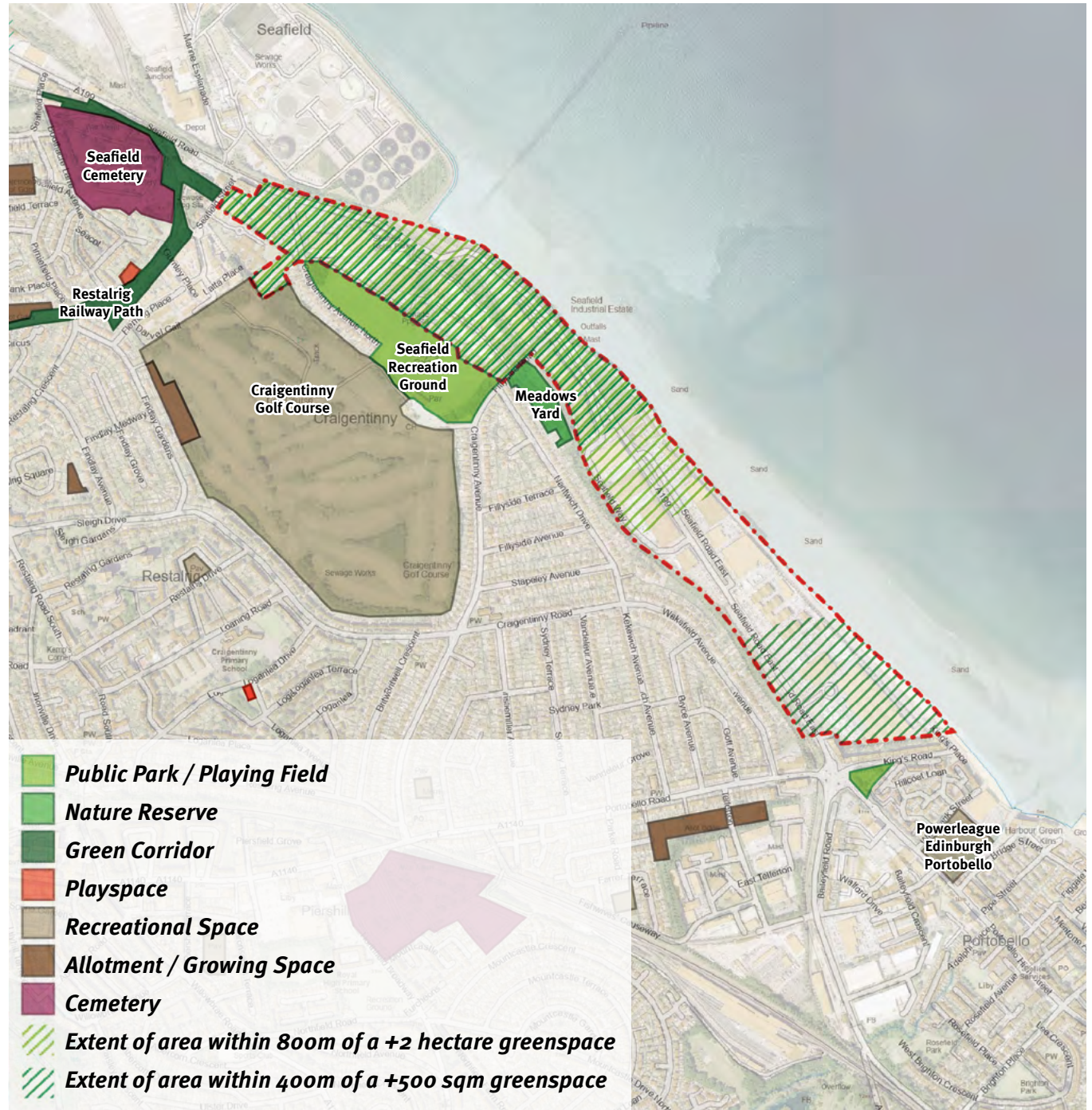
### Access to Green & Open Space

There are two green spaces adjacent to the Seafield site:

- **Meadows Yard** – A 1.05ha nature reserve and community park located next to the railway line.
- **Seafield Recreation Ground** – 5.54ha playing fields with six grass pitches.

There are also green and open spaces in the wider context, including part of the disused railway green corridor network, Craigentinny Golf Course, Seafield Cemetery and several allotments and small recreational sites.

The north and south of Seafield satisfy the Council's Local Greenspace Standard (within 400m walking distance of a local open space of 500sqm of 'good' quality). The northern half of Seafield also satisfies the Large Greenspace Standard (within 800m walking distance of a greenspace of 2ha of 'good/good+' quality).







**Meadows Yard**



**Seafield Recreation Ground**



## Coastal Landscape

Edinburgh's coastline stretches approximately 28 kilometres (km) along the Firth of Forth from South Queensferry to Joppa, ranging from undeveloped rural land to ageing industrial estates to densely-developed urban neighbourhoods.

Seafield and Portobello, much like the coast at Cramond, form a key area where people can interact with long stretches of sandy beach, away from more the more built-up harbours and docks at Leith and Granton.

The current context of car showrooms, light industrial uses and bus depot contrast with the 19th century seafront housing and leisure facilities which line the esplanade at Portobello.

A sea wall forms the coastal edge, with rock armour and groynes in places and a strong maritime character results from the changing tides, exposure to the elements and coastal light, the smell of the sea, and views to the Firth of Forth and coastal activities.



## 2.7 BIODIVERSITY

As part of the wider Firth of Forth area, Seafield beach and the adjacent coast is covered by three designations to protect biodiversity:

- **Site of Special Scientific Interest.** These are areas of land and water considered to best represent natural heritage. The Firth of Forth SSSI is designated for coastal habitats, wading birds, insects and geological features.
- **Special Protection Area.** These are sites selected to protect threatened or vulnerable bird species.
- **Ramsar Site.** These are wetlands (including coastal habitats) of international importance.

Recreational disturbance impacts the biodiversity of the Firth of Forth, especially dog-walking and water sport activity.





## 2.8 VIEWS

The site impacts the following significant types of views:

### Outward Views



These are enabled by the open aspect to the coastline, allowing uninterrupted views towards islands within the Firth of Forth and Fife Coast to the north and in the east North Berwick Law and East Lothian shoreline.

### Inland Views



These are characterised by layers of rising landform and townscape which step up from the coastal edge towards the Old Town ridge, Salisbury Crags and Arthur's Seat. The disused railway line, Seafield Recreation Ground and Craigtinny Golf Course form more open and treed features in the middle ground of views.

### Coastal Backdrop



The coastline provides the backdrop to many city views, including protected skyline views, which reinforce the city's relationship with the coast and contribute to the setting of the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site.



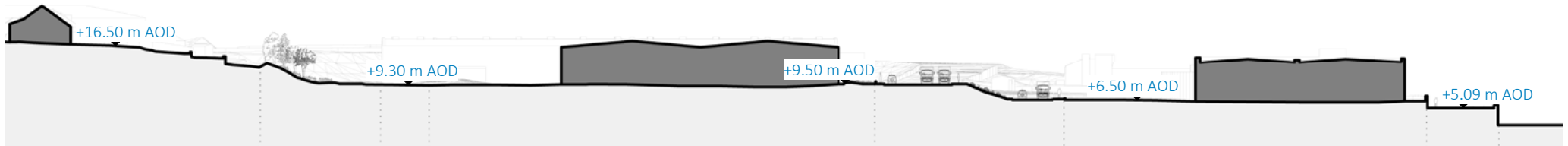
## 2.9 TOPOGRAPHY

Levels vary across the site. In the northern part of the site Seafield Recreation ground, Seafield retail park and the Seafield Household Waste Recycling centre is mostly flat and between 7.5 - 9m AOD. There are some lower sites containing large-shed retail units that are next to the railway. Seafield Road is on a higher level of approximately 13m AOD. Between Seafield Road and the sea is a steep bank.

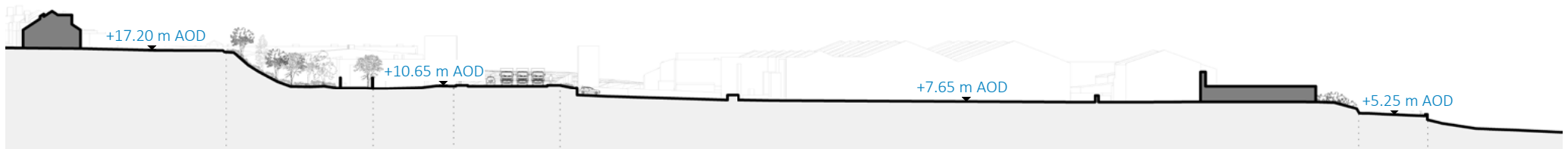
The southern part of the site has a steadier gradient than the north. The promenade is the lowest part of the site at approximately 5 - 5.5m AOD. The site gradually rises to the west to a height of between 9 - 11m AOD next to the railway.



Section AA



Section BB



Section CC



## 2.10 FLOOD RISK & COASTAL EROSION

Most of the site has a low likelihood of surface water flooding. Some parts of the site, such as the Seafield Recreation ground and some of the site next to the railway, have a higher risk of surface water flooding.<sup>1</sup>

At present, the site is not identified by SEPA as an area at risk of coastal flooding.<sup>1</sup>

However modelling suggests that without sufficient mitigation measures some areas on the site may be at risk of coastal flooding due to coastal erosion and rising sea levels due to climate change.

The areas to the south-east of the Seafield Road and Fillyside Road junction and to the north-west of Fillyside Road have a lower height above sea level. This places them at higher risk of future coastal flooding.

The Council is developing a strategy to respond to the risk of coastal flooding.



<sup>1</sup> - SEPA Flood Maps - Accessed 29/07/2024



## 2.11 SOCIAL & EXPERIENTIAL

### Social Deprivation

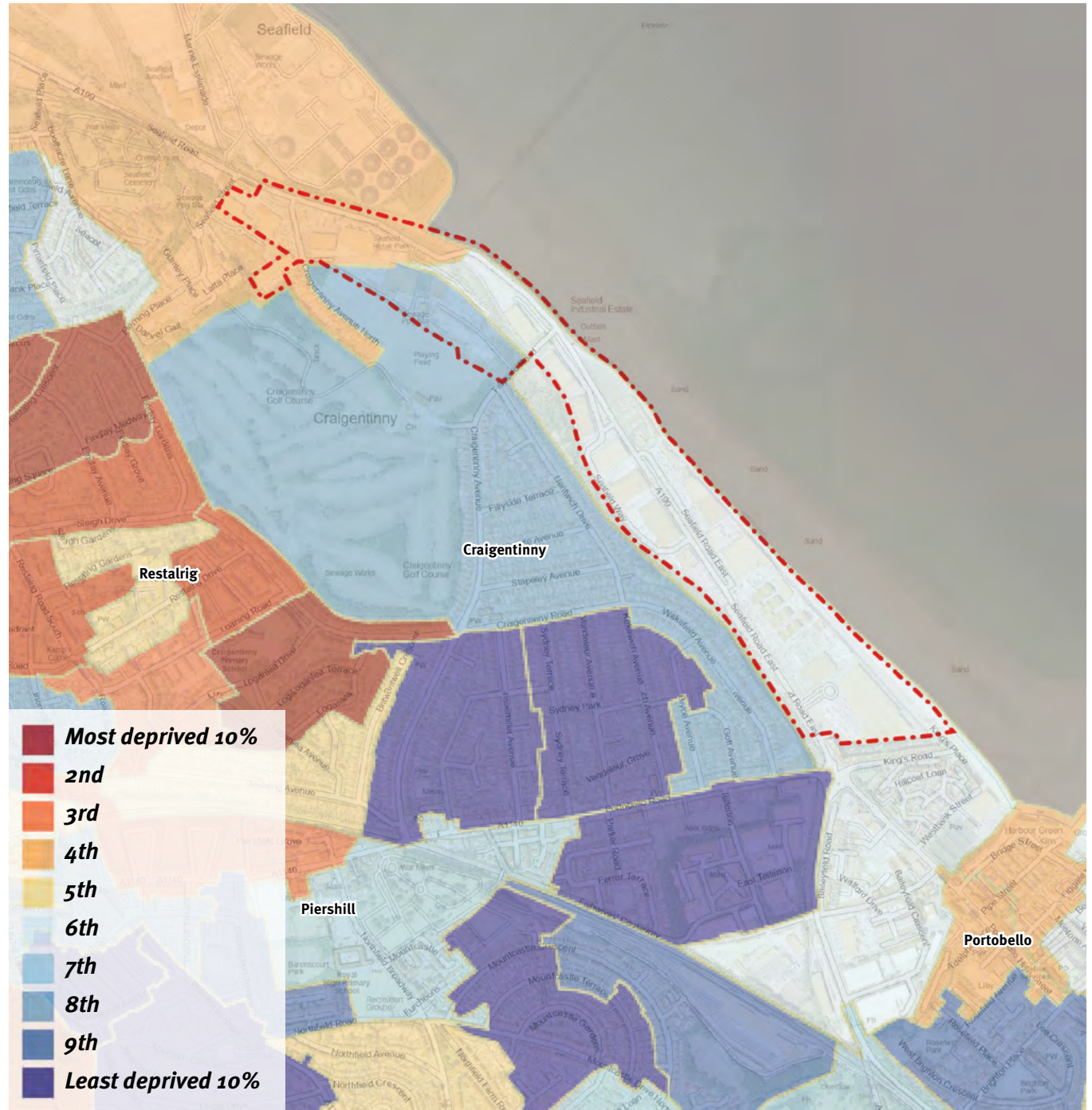
The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation is a relative measure of deprivation. It considers deprivation with regards to income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime and housing.

The area around Seafield has a mixed social and economic profile.

The site currently falls within the middle of the levels of deprivation, ranging from the 4th to the 8th most deprived.

There are also of high deprivation to the west of the site in Restalrig and northern Piershill.

There are areas to the south of the site in southern Craigentenny and Portobello that have very low levels of deprivation.





## Identity & Character

The beach and the promenade are the most positive aspects of the current site in the eyes of the local community. In particular, the quiet nature of the promenade and beach. The area is popular for cycling, running, and walking.

The poor appearance of Seafield is seen as the most negative aspect, along with the smell of the waste water treatment works.

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## Safety

There are two primary safety concerns regarding the Seafield site:

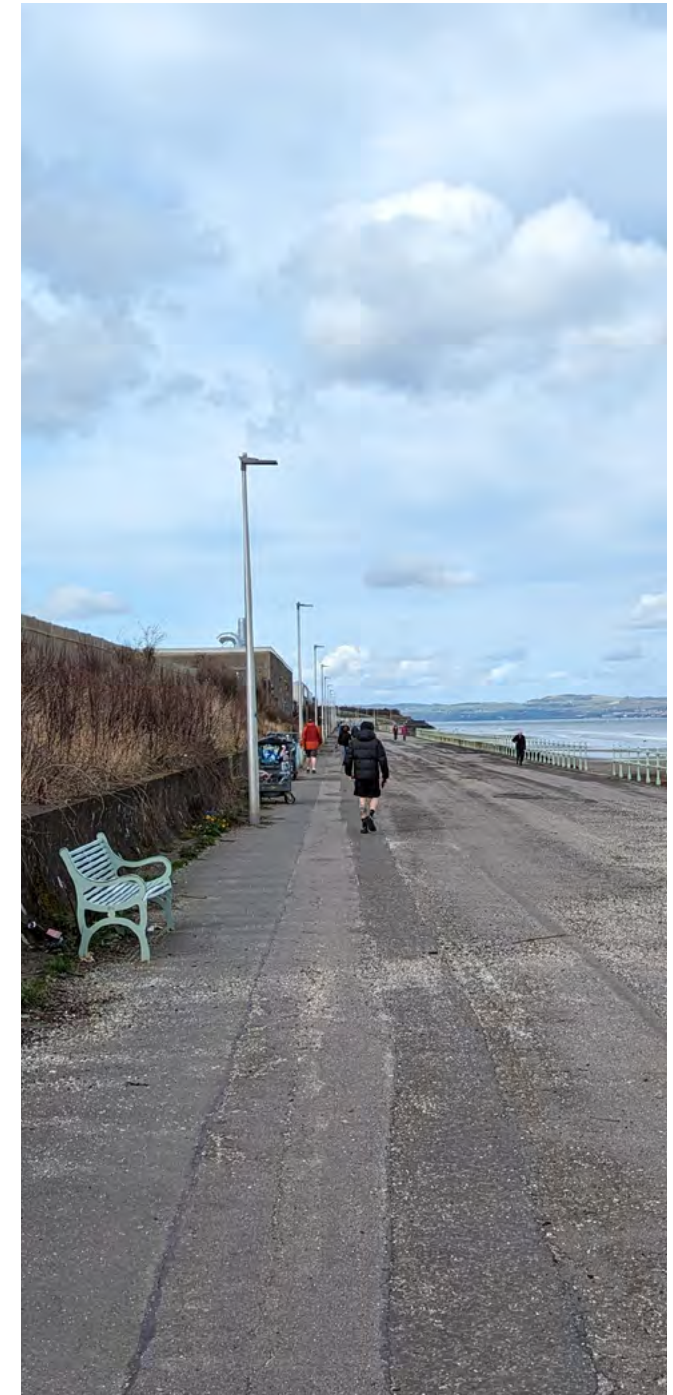
- The high levels of traffic travelling at high speed on Seafield Road East.
- The lack of observation and poor lighting on the promenade, particularly in the evening and night-time.

## Community aspirations

The community in and around Seafield have expressed the following priorities for the development of the site:

- Improved public transport connections across the site. Especially the provision of a bus service.
- A safer and more pleasant environment for walking, wheeling and cycling.
- Increased active uses on the promenade, such as cafés, shops, restaurants, small businesses and community space.
- Improvements to the public realm and more green space.

If the site is developed for housing the community has emphasised the importance that this provides a mix of ownership options and housing types, including genuinely affordable housing.





# 3. VISION

## 3.1 VISION OUTLINE

Seafield is an area with a varied history. It has been transformed from meadows to pleasure grounds to rail sidings and testing grounds to car showrooms, trade retail and depots. The development of Seafield would allow for the next stage in the site's history.

The transformation of Seafield into a distinctive new neighbourhood can connect the coastline and surrounding communities of Craigentenny, Portobello and Leith.

It can also provide much-needed new housing, including affordable housing, alongside a range of other uses to create a vibrant and sustainable neighbourhood with a strong sense of community. The creation of a range of green spaces and improved connections and facilities will benefit both the new Seafield residents and those of the surrounding areas.

Development of the site should build and enhance the unique coastal character of the area. This presents both the greatest

opportunity for Seafield, and the most significant challenge. Opportunities to enjoy the coastline should be balanced with protection for the important biodiversity of the area. The design of the development must be responsive to the increased risk of coastal flooding due to climate change and ensure that the new neighbourhood is resilient to the challenges of the future.





## 3.2 VISION DIAGRAM



### Key

-  **Place Brief boundary**
-  **Developable Area**
-  **Biodiversity Protection Area**
-  **Green Space**
-  **Linear Green Park**
-  **Green Connections**
-  **Improved Public Transport Link**
-  **Improved Active Travel Link**
-  **Promenade Link**
-  **Safeguarded Rail Link**
-  **Key Views**
-  **Waste Water Treatment Works**



## 3.3 DESIGN PRINCIPLES



### Distinctive

- **A distinctive Seafield identity.** Create a neighbourhood with a distinctive local identity that is complementary to yet distinct from the character of neighbouring areas. Respond to the varied history of Seafield and the wider area in the design of buildings and spaces, including through the architectural styles, materials, landscape design and inclusion of artwork. Respond to the architectural context, particularly of neighbouring buildings on King's Road and Seafield Street.
- **A rugged coastal destination.** Enhance the character of the unique coastal edge of Seafield through the development of the area. Create a wilder and nature-focused promenade that contrasts with the leisure-focused promenade in Portobello. Improve the planting and signposting along the promenade.
- **A vibrant and mixed neighbourhood.** Include a mix of housing types characteristic of Edinburgh and appropriately combine housing with commercial, employment and community uses in mixed-use proposals.



### Pleasant

- **An attractive and welcoming neighbourhood.** Design routes, spaces and buildings to be pleasant spaces to occupy. Mitigate the impact of the noise and air pollution from Seafield Road East and odours from the Seafield Waste Water Treatment Works through the design and location of openings and external spaces. Avoid excessive overshadowing of homes and public spaces, especially key spaces such as the promenade.
- **Protect the enjoyment of views to, from and across the site.** Create spaces for the enjoyment of views out across the Firth of Forth and inward towards the Old Town ridge, Salisbury Crags and Arthur's Seat. Maximise the opportunities for the enjoyment of these views through the layout of buildings. Design buildings to avoid undue impact of local and wider views, including consideration of the impact of design on protected skyline views.
- **Provide spaces for the enjoyment of nature.** Create spaces on the promenade to enjoy the unique natural landscape of the Seafield coast. Protect semi-natural spaces in the area, such as Meadows Yard.





## Healthy

- **Support healthy and active lifestyles for new residents and surrounding communities.** Provide a range of good quality green and open spaces for recreation and access to nature. Locate these spaces throughout Seafield so that both new and neighbouring residential areas meet the Council's Greenspace standards.
- **Support outdoor play and recreation for children and young people.** Provide a variety of good quality play spaces and areas for incidental play across Seafield, including spaces for children and young people to have access to nature.
- **A new welcoming Seafield community.** Design opportunities for social and community gathering across the site, including a new community hub that contains healthcare, education and community space.
- **A safe and accessible neighbourhood.** Create a safe and accessible environment for people of all ages, genders and abilities, at all times of day. Ensure that spaces and routes have sufficient lighting and design buildings to encourage activity and provide passive surveillance.



## Connected

- **Provide safe and pleasant routes for walking, wheeling and cycling.** Improve the quality of walking routes and provide infrastructure for safe cycling. Improve the Seafield Road East environment to create a safer and less intimidating experience for pedestrians and cyclists. Improve the crossing opportunities across the site. Improve the quality of the promenade space for walking and wheeling.
- **Support public transport improvements.** Design the area to support the extension of public transport across the site. Create safe and accessible locations for bus stops to support the proposed orbital bus route. Support opportunities for the rail link to be used for public transport. Create a new mobility hub in a central and accessible location to bring together transport facilities with other services.
- **Connect coastal communities.** Create safe links between the waterfront, Craigentiny, Portobello and Leith. Ensure that proposed active travel routes and green/blue corridors connect to existing networks surrounding the site, including the Edinburgh Promenade route and disused railway green corridor network.





## Sustainable

- **Powered by renewable energy.** Create a design that supports the delivery of a heat network connected to the Seafeld Waste Water Treatment Works. Include opportunities for communal renewable electricity generation.
- **Protect the unique Seafeld biodiversity.** Design the promenade and adjacent buildings to be sympathetic to the significant coastal habitats of the Firth of Forth. Include planting that is suited to this environment and enhances the biodiversity. Prevent adverse impacts to vulnerable bird species. Include biodiversity enhancements across the area that build on the existing blue-green network.
- **Living well locally.** Provide safe and convenient access to a range of local facilities, including education, recreation, health, local shopping and community spaces. Support an active local economy through the inclusion of employment, enterprise and charity spaces.



## Adaptable

- **Maximise the lifespan of buildings and spaces.** Create buildings and spaces that are durable, easily maintained and can accommodate future alternative uses.
- **Designed to adapt to future sea levels.** Design the layout and buildings to respond to the increased risk of coastal flooding due to rising sea levels and coastal erosion caused by climate change. Identify opportunities for creating space between buildings and the coastline. Design a movement network that is resilient to the flooding of coastal routes.
- **Resilient to a changing climate.** Design buildings and spaces that respond to changing weather patterns, including high levels of rainfall. Include opportunities for sustainable drainage.