

Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 12 November 2020

Edinburgh's coastline – update

Executive/routine	Routine
Wards	1, 4, 13, 14, 17
Council Commitments	13 , 16 , 17 , 39

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that Committee notes the update on Edinburgh's coastline.

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Edinburgh's coastline – update

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report provides an update on projects in which the Council is involved that concern preserving and enhancing the historic and environmental features of Edinburgh's coastline and enhancing residents' access to Edinburgh's coastline.

3. Background

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 On [31 May 2018](#), a motion by Councillor Mary Campbell was agreed by the City of Edinburgh Council. The motion noted the value of Edinburgh's coastline and called for a scoping report setting out work to date, work currently in train, and work needing to be undertaken in relation to Edinburgh's coastline.
- 3.3 On [20 June 2019](#), the Transport and Environment Committee considered a report on Edinburgh's coastline. The report noted the significant protection given to the built and natural heritage of Edinburgh's coastline by the Edinburgh Local Development Plan and the current work ongoing by the Council to further enhance this heritage. The report noted that oversight for matters pertaining to the coastline was provided by the Waterfront All Party Oversight Group. The Committee:
- 3.3.1 Agreed that the Council seek to deliver a continuous active travel route along Edinburgh's coastline from South Queensferry to Joppa while exploring with East Lothian Council the scope to extend this route eastward; and
- 3.3.2 Requested that an update report be provided after one year.

4. Main report

- 4.1 This report provides an update on Council projects concerning preserving and enhancing the historic and environmental features of Edinburgh's coastline and enhancing residents' access to Edinburgh's coastline.

- 4.2 The Council's bid to the Sustrans Places for Everyone fund for funding to deliver the next phase of the Edinburgh Promenade (section K1 to L, from Granton Beach to Granton Harbour) was unfortunately unsuccessful. The main feedback was that Sustrans would not be able to support a shared-use path in this location, meaning this section of the Promenade would need to have segregation between cyclists and pedestrians. Sustrans has invited the Council to make a revised bid and this is currently being worked on by officers. Consideration is also being given to how the Places for Everyone fund could be applied for to deliver other projects along the coastline, albeit finding Council match funding will prove challenging.
- 4.3 The Council also made an application to the Heritage Fund's Heritage Horizon Awards fund for a project titled "Edinburgh's Shoreline Heritage". The project would include strengthening of coastal woodland strips through tree planting; creation of additional wetland, coastal grassland and dune habitats along the coastline; conversion of contaminated brownfield land into coastal parks; and the restoration of a not-for-profit chain ferry using Victorian gravity technology across the River Almond, linking the project area to the National Cycle Network and John Muir Way. The Heritage Horizon Awards fund was heavily oversubscribed and unfortunately this application was also unsuccessful. Officers will explore alternative avenues for delivering this project.
- 4.4 In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council rapidly put in place temporary changes to various streets in Edinburgh to enhance their usability by pedestrians and cyclists as part of the Spaces for People project. These have included the closure of Silverknowes Road between Marine Drive and Lauriston Farm Road.
- 4.5 A development framework for Granton Waterfront was agreed by Planning Committee on [26 February 2020](#). A key principle for the development of the area set out by the framework is "*celebrating the Firth of Forth's unique and biodiverse shoreline [...] enhancing and expanding spaces for open access to natural and urban coastal activities.*" The proposals include creating a new coastal park at North Shore, turning an ageing industrial estate into new green-space that will enhance amenity and also bolster resilience to flooding/rising sea levels/coastal erosion. The Granton Waterfront development is a massive Council project and is intended to set a new standard for waterfront developments in Edinburgh.
- 4.6 The Council is also currently exploring the scope for redeveloping brownfield land at Seafield. A key element of this is building in resilience to future flooding/rising sea levels/coastal erosion by developing new coastal green spaces which would deliver ecological benefits.
- 4.7 The scope to extend the promenade eastward of Joppa as far as Cockenzie has not yet been explored in depth. It is noted that various proposals for the former power plant site at Cockenzie have been brought forward. East Lothian Council has asked the Scottish Government to designate Cockenzie as a National Development.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The Council will continue to deliver the various projects set out in this report. Key developments in each project will continue to be reported to the Waterfront All Party Oversight Group.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 There are no direct financial impacts arising from this report.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 There are not considered to be any negative equalities impacts arising from this report. The Edinburgh Promenade Design Code takes account of the needs of users with mobility issues and therefore extending the Promenade would enhance the ability of people with mobility issues to experience Edinburgh's coastline.
- 7.2 Most of Edinburgh's coastline is designated as a Natura 2000 Special Protection Area and a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The Edinburgh Local Development Plan regulates development in these areas in view of the designation.
- 7.3 Significant consultation with residents and other stakeholders has been undertaken as part of the work to develop the Granton Waterfront development framework. Dialogue is now underway with relevant community councils around the potential future redevelopment of Seafield.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 [Edinburgh Promenade Design Code](#)
- 8.2 [Edinburgh Local Development Plan, policy T7](#)
- 8.3 ["A Strategy for the Edinburgh Boardwalk" – report to Planning Committee, 12 January 2006](#)
- 8.4 ["Edinburgh Promenade" – report to Planning Committee, 14 May 2009](#)
- 8.5 [Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan](#)
- 8.6 [Active Travel Action Plan](#)
- 8.7 ["Granton Waterfront Regeneration – Delivery Strategy" – report to Housing and Economy Committee, 1 November 2018](#)
- 8.9 ["Spaces for People Programme Update" – report to Policy and Sustainability Committee, 11 June 2020](#)

9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1 – Edinburgh’s Coastline – Protecting and Enhancing our “Blue Belt” – Motion by Councillor Mary Campbell

Appendix 1 – Edinburgh’s Coastline – Protecting and Enhancing our “Blue Belt” – Motion by Councillor Mary Campbell

Council

- 1) Believes that as a capital city we benefit from both our historic city centre, and also our beautiful coastline. Our coastline has many highlights, from the sandy beach of Portobello, to the sea life-rich rocks in the Forth, and the stunning views from the promenade at Cramond.
- 2) Notes that, as a Council we invest a lot of time and effort in our city centre, for the benefit of both residents and visitors. Council believes that a similar level of effort should also be applied to our coastline, to ensure that we are preserving and enhancing the wide variety of historic and environmental features that make our coastline so special, and to enhance residents access to our coastline by creating a continuous active travel promenade from Joppa to South Queensferry;
- 3) Notes that the Council has undertaken some work to pursue this agenda, both separately and in co-operation with partners, including production of the Edinburgh Promenade Design Code and SESTRAN studies on cross-boundary cycle development; that some off-road cycle/footpath links have been identified in the LDP but notes that progress to deliver on this work has been a little sporadic;
- 4) Further notes that some Council partners including the Scottish Wildlife Trust and Royal Botanic Gardens have projects to enhance & preserve the natural heritage and biodiversity of our coastline;
- 5) Therefore agrees to receive a scoping report which covers the work to date, work currently in train, and the scope of work which needs to be undertaken in the future. This should report within two cycles to be brought to the Transport and Environment Committee, and should include options for political governance of the work.
- 6) Notes that residents and businesses have already been working hard to protect and enhance the coastline, and any strategy should include a clear mechanism for engaging with all key stakeholders.