

**Feasibility Study on a High Quality Active Travel Link  
between Musselburgh and Portobello  
Initial Report**



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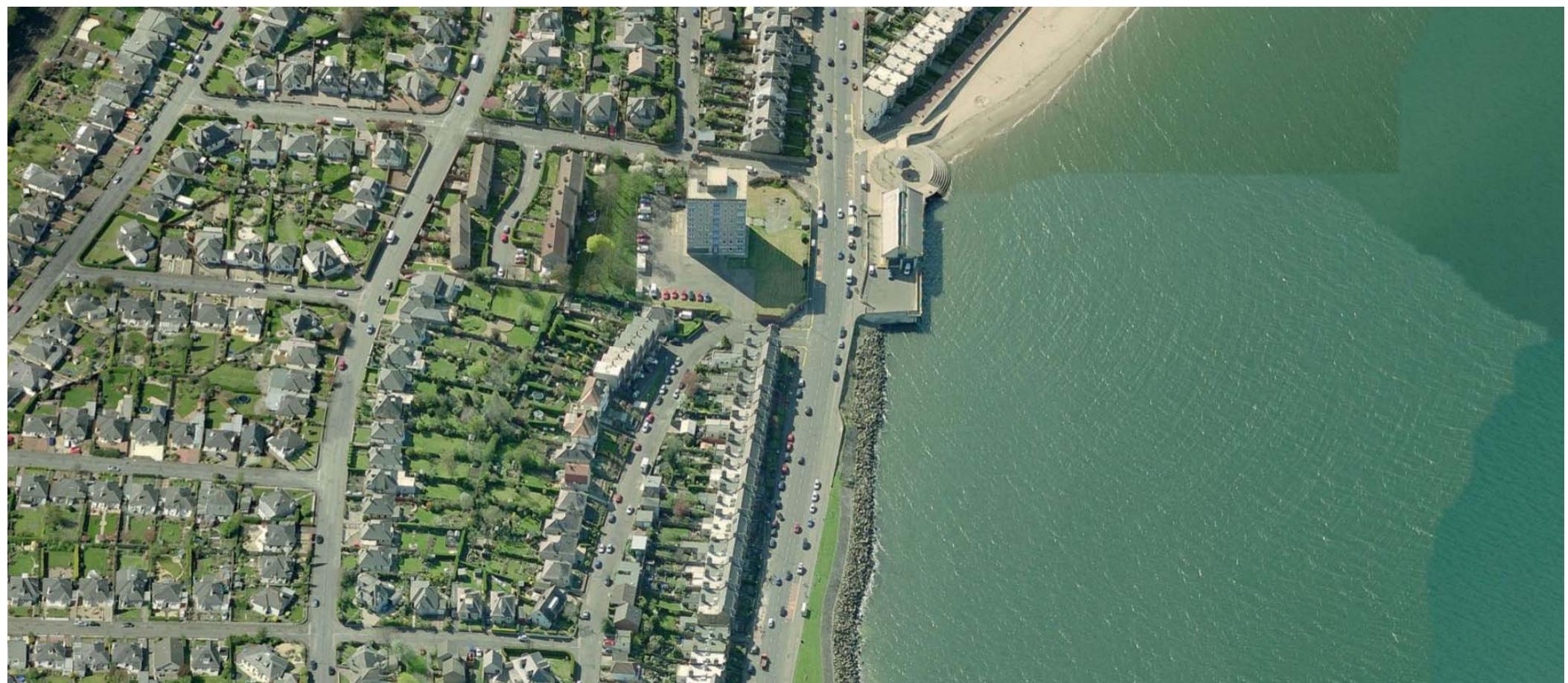
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Aerial photograph at Portobello Promenade



# Executive Summary

## The Opportunity

SEStran, Sustrans, City of Edinburgh Council and East Lothian Council are investigating the feasibility of creating an upgraded cycle link between Musselburgh and Portobello. In 2015 the Strategic Cross Boundary Cycle Development Report identified the B6415/ A199 Musselburgh Harbour as a “missing link” in the active travel opportunities within the Edinburgh area.

## Active Travel

Increasing the number of journeys made on foot and by bicycle helps achieve many local and national outcomes and aligns with a number of the Scottish Government’s policy objectives. The Scottish Government’s vision is that “**by 2020, 10% of all journeys taken in Scotland will be by bike.**” (Cycling Action Plan for Scotland 2013). The overall aim of recent policy is to encourage and enable people to choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment, by human-powered modes of travel (eg. walking & cycling) as opposed to motorised transport.

## Route Options Explored

The feasibility study has involved the detailed examination of the potential to provide a defined active travel route, maintain car parking, greater pedestrian connection to the seafront and improved pedestrian and cycling segregation and space provision, together with maintenance of vehicle access through the B6415/ A199 corridor. Options explored included:

- **Option 1: Existing B6415 / A199 Road Corridor:** widening of the existing footway, maintaining parking and providing crossing points
- **Option 2: Coastal Route:** development of a new path routed on the seaward side of the existing coastal built development, connecting Portobello Promenade with Musselburgh Promenade

## Landscape Considerations

The site borders the Firth of Forth Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site, which is a European designated site protected for its wintering bird assemblages. The site is underpinned by the Firth of Forth SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest). The Firth of Forth SSSI is an extensive coastal area designated for a variety of geological and geomorphological features, coastal and terrestrial habitats, vascular plants, invertebrates, breeding, passage and wintering birds. SEStran should seek early consultation with Scottish Natural Heritage as to the potential impacts and survey / assessment that may be required as part of the consenting process for each of the proposed options.

## Recommendations (subject to future consultation)

Subject to future consultation outcomes the feasibility study has concluded that the differences in costs and ease of delivery between the coastal route (Option 2) and the existing road corridor option (Option 1) are such that the coastal path route option is better explored and developed as a companion, longer-term project. The existing road corridor option is more readily achievable, cheaper and better suited to meet the requirements of Active Travel users.

**We recommend taking forward the proposed B6145 / A199 road corridor route (Option 1) for further consultation and discussion, with recognition that discussions may result in the final preferred route incorporating some section of path realigned to take advantage of the sections of open ground that afford less challenging options for the construction of a ‘coastal’ route.**

Aerial photograph from at Portobello Promenade to Musselburgh Harbour



# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 The Study

SEStran has commissioned Ironside Farrar to investigate the feasibility of creating an upgraded cycle link between Musselburgh and Portobello, on behalf of SEStran, City of Edinburgh Council and East Lothian Council. This transport corridor has been identified as part of a regional cycling network in the SEStran Strategic Cross Boundary Cycle Development Report, and identified as an important missing link in the wider path network.

SEStran aims to develop a strategy for guiding investment in cross local authority boundary sections of the cycling network, with particular focus on routes suitable for commuters. In 2015 the Strategic Cross Boundary Cycle Development Report commissioned by SEStran, and produced by Peter Brett Associates clearly identified the B6415 / A199 Musselburgh Harbour as a “missing link” in the active travel opportunities within the greater Edinburgh area and links to the John Muir Way. The cycle lanes to Musselburgh from the Edinburgh currently offer a level of route promotion and protection, but the section of the route which is subject of this study remains challenging.

Sestrans and Sustrans joint funding has allowed a detailed examination of the potential for road network intervention within the “missing link” to provide the following positive benefits to the City of Edinburgh and East Lothian Active Travel programmes:

- Provide defined and protected car parking opportunity
- Secure greater pedestrian connection to the seafront
- Enable improved pedestrian and cycling segregation and space provision
- Safeguard full vehicle access and passage through the B6415/ A199 corridor

The aims of the project are threefold:

1. Assess the feasibility of creating a cycleway connecting Portobello and Musselburgh Promenades
2. Provide safer walking routes, increasing permeability of the area, enhanced public realm and user experience
3. Improve the streetscape and public realm

This report sets out the findings of the study to identify and evaluate the options for improving this connection, testing route options, preparing indicative designs and cost estimates.

## 1.2 Study Area

At study commencement it was agreed that the route should connect the Portobello and the Musselburgh Promenades, that it was preferred that pedestrians and cyclists should both be catered for and that they should each have a dedicated, segregated path if possible. The core area for consideration is the linear connection between Portobello and Musselburgh that is formed by the existing road network, namely Seaview Terrace, Eastfield and Edinburgh Road. Connections to and from this road corridor, and the option for a coastal linkage, have been considered.

The starting and end points of the study are:

- Portobello Prom, at Joppa Pumping Station
- Musselburgh Prom, at Fisherrow Harbour



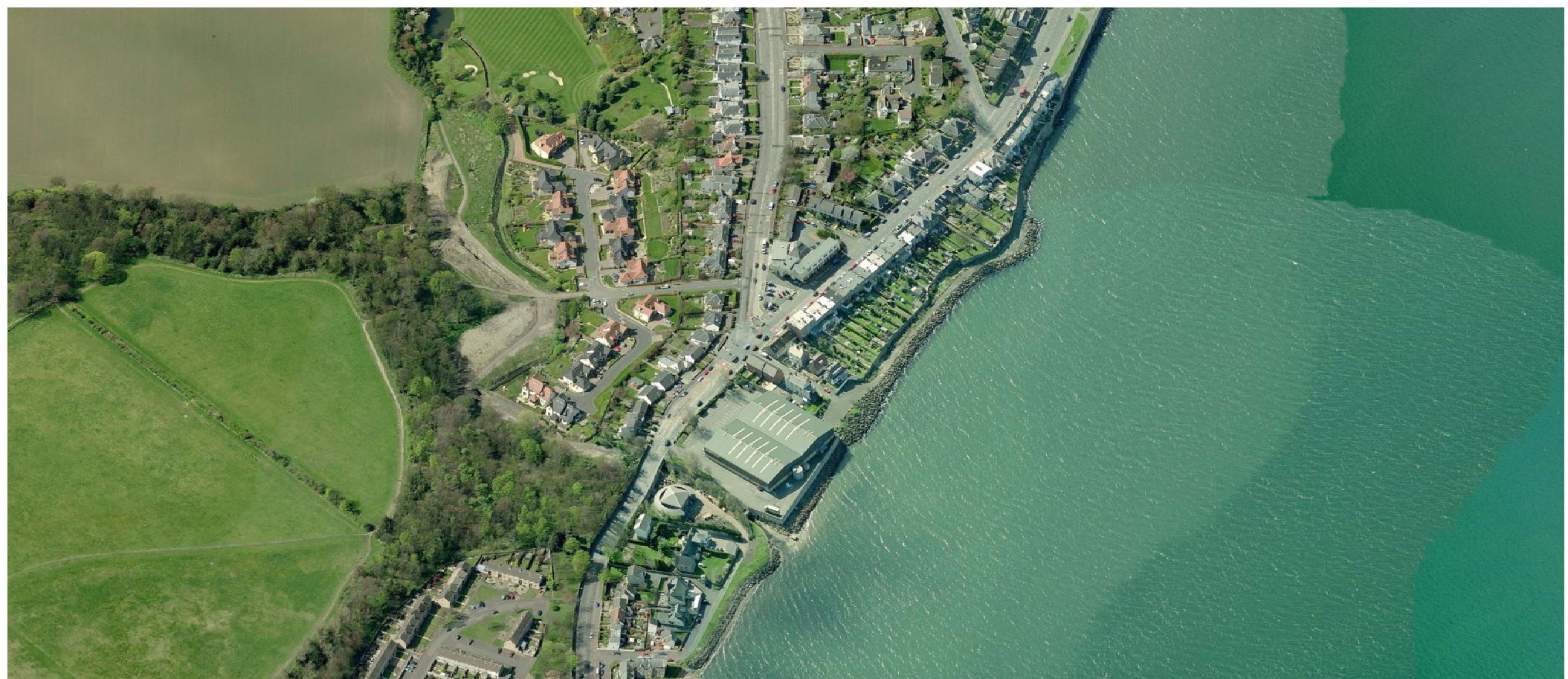
### **1.3 Active Travel Routes**

Active travel offers a key mechanism to promote sustainable choices for communities, with strong economic, social, health and environmental outcomes. City of Edinburgh Council and East Lothian Council have an opportunity to take a strategic lead in promoting active travel by building an interconnected route that supports people choosing to travel actively as part of their everyday lives, whether to get to work, use local services or to visit friends.

Creating places and communities where active travel is an option of choice secures many outcomes. These support health and well-being, environmental quality, social inclusion, place-making, safe communities and increased economic activity. National policy advocates investment in active travel (walking and cycling) and seeks to reduce dependency on carbon intensive travel modes, reflecting the multiple benefits it brings to society. Active Travel will directly contribute to the targets set out in the Government's National Physical Activity Strategy (Let's Make Scotland More Active, 2003) and the outcomes set out in Cycling Action Plan for Scotland (2013).

From the perspective of the wider Scottish context, the vision contained in the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland is that by 2020, 10% of everyday journeys taken in Scotland will be by bike. **Providing this key link between Musselburgh and Portobello will enable cycle commuters, leisure cyclists and people making local journeys to opt for a safer, more convenient route to work and school, between town centres and to access local path routes around the area.** Furthermore, a strengthened path network will enhance the existing leisure tourism opportunities, making them more accessible for local people and visitors.

Aerial photograph at A199/B6415 Junction



## 1.4 The Benefits

Best practice guidance suggests that the creation of a continuous active travel route between Portobello and Musselburgh might help the local area in a number of ways, as follows:

### ***Improve health and wellbeing***

Active travel enables people to be physically active as part of their daily routine. Conversely, getting people more physically active can help treat and prevent more than twenty chronic diseases.

### ***Create better places for people***

Scottish Government policy states that pedestrians and cyclists should be considered first when designing new streets or modifying existing ones. Improving the walking and cycling environment creates places less dominated by motor vehicles and more welcoming for people.

### ***Increase access to jobs and services***

In Scotland, 30% of households do not own a car, which can act as a barrier to accessing services and work. Making services easily accessible on foot and by bicycle helps reduce inequalities and create a more inclusive society.

### ***Reduce carbon emissions***

All local authorities signed Scotland's Climate Change Declaration committing them to tackling climate change at a local level. Additionally, the Scottish Government aims for "almost complete decarbonisation of road transport by 2050". Increasing the proportion of journeys made by active modes supports both these aims.

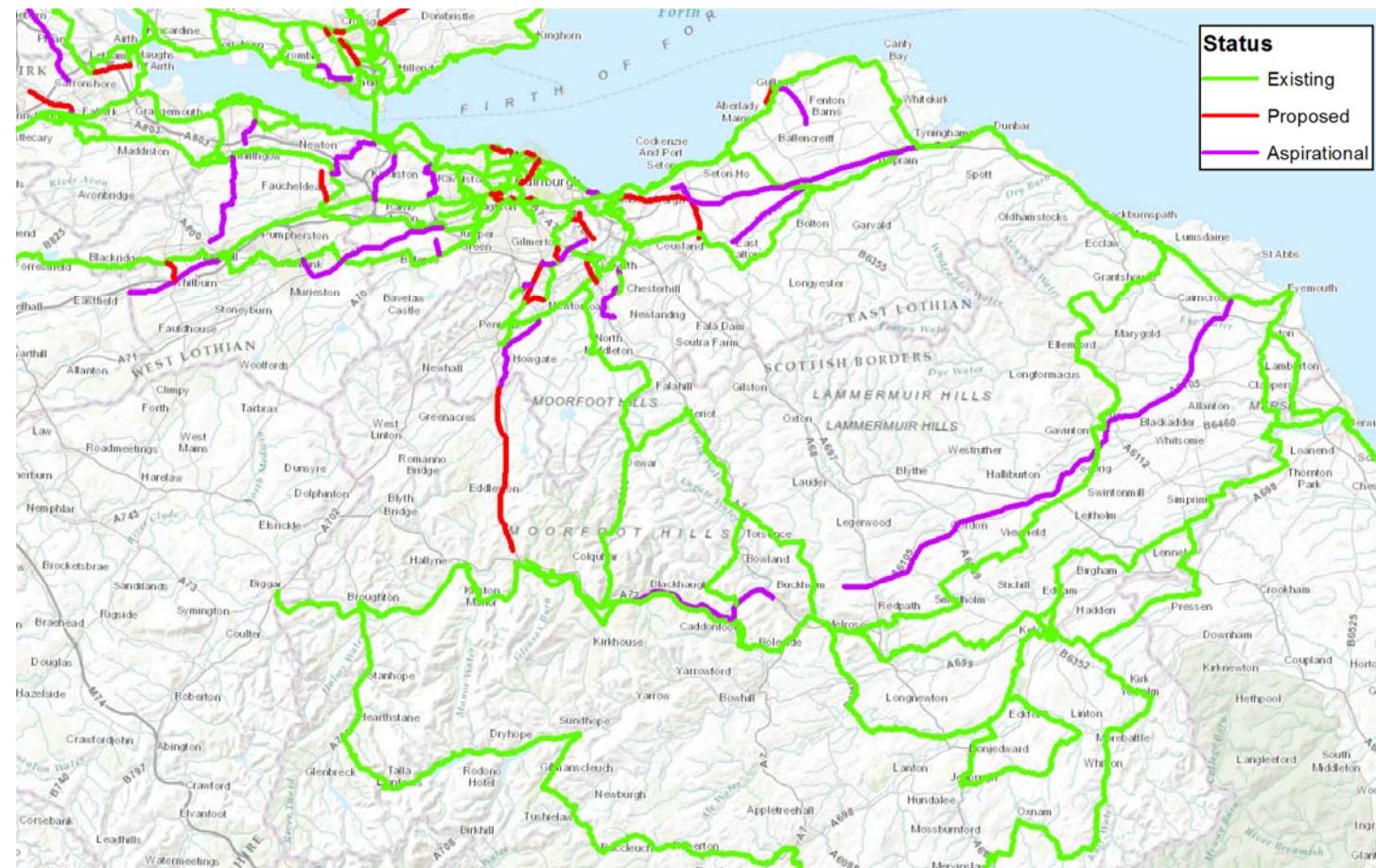
### ***Improve air quality***

Walking and cycling are the ultimate zero emissions forms of transport, so increasing the proportion of journeys made by these modes will help achieve local air quality standards.

### ***Reduce congestion***

Walking and cycling are a more efficient use of street space than journeys made by car. Therefore, increasing the proportion of journeys made by these modes will reduce congestion.

Regional Walking & Cycling Network (SEStran Strategic Cross Boundary Cycle Development 2015)



## 2.0 National, Regional and Local Policy

### 2.1 National Policy Framework

Increasing the number of journeys made on foot and by bicycle helps achieve many local and national outcomes and aligns with a number of the Scottish Government's policy objectives, as follows:

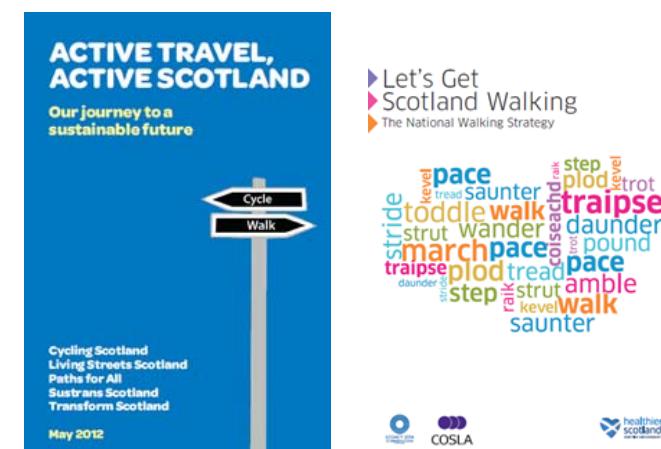
The **Cycling Action Plan** sets out the Scottish Government's vision:

"By 2020, 10% of all journeys taken in Scotland will be by bike." (*Cycling Action Plan for Scotland 2013*) Providing this key link between Musselburgh and Portobello will enable cycle commuters, leisure cyclists and people making local journeys to opt for a safer, more convenient route to work and school, between town centres and to access local path routes around the area.

The vision of **Scotland's National Walking Strategy** is:

"A Scotland where everyone benefits from walking as part of their everyday journeys, enjoys walking in the outdoors and where places are well designed to encourage walking." (*Let's Get Scotland Walking 2014*)

Key aspirations of the **Scottish Land Use Strategy** (2011) are to reduce carbon emissions and develop a healthier, more outdoor lifestyle that is more connected to the natural landscape. Delivery of a continuous route along the Joppa seafront will also help deliver the objectives of the **Climate Change (Scotland) Act** (2009), to mitigate emissions, adapt to climate change and enable sustainable decision making.





## 2.2 Regional Policy Aspirations

The overall aim of recent policy drivers is to encourage and enable people to choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment. These aspirations have resulted in the creation of a **Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN)**, and have recently been incorporated into **Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)** in 2014. CSGN aspires to “Develop foot & cycle networks as part of a more sustainable transport network” and “expand recreational opportunities close to population centres, encouraging active travel and healthier lifestyles”.

**SEStran Regional Transport Strategy (RTS)** sets out objectives of reducing car dependencies, encouraging behavioural change, promoting walking and cycling, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving road safety. Priority is to be given to schemes which improve accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling, especially in new developments and for disadvantaged communities. The RTS placed a high priority on the promotion of commuter cycling. Following the RTS, SEStran prepared study for the identification of areas and issues that could be addressed through future investment in infrastructure **Development of a Strategic Urban Cycle Network: Study Report (2010)**, which included the City of Edinburgh and East Lothian Council areas.

The **SESplan** supports modal shift towards sustainable modes of travel through the delivery of the Regional Walking and Cycling Network. **NPF3** recommends that walking and cycling should be a priority within the Central Scotland Green Network.

### **Strategic Cross Boundary Cycle Development Report**

The lack of connection between Portobello and Musselburgh/John Muir Way was highlighted in the 2015 **Strategic Cross Boundary Cycle Development Study**, which identified routes to improve active travel between local authority areas



**Length:** 570m<sup>2</sup>

**Ownership:** Public

**Status:** Available

**Phasing:** 2013-2017

#### **Description:**

Located with Portobello Conservation Area  
This is the eastern terminus of the Promenade.

The area currently comprises elevated viewing platform with an open gazebo, benches, tree planting, public toilets and a pumping station. The gazebo is an attractive structure, but badly rusting in places. There is good signage (Birds of the Forth). The paving is mono-bloc in generally good condition with some minor repairs needed. Some of the tree planting needs replacing. A bus stop is located nearby.

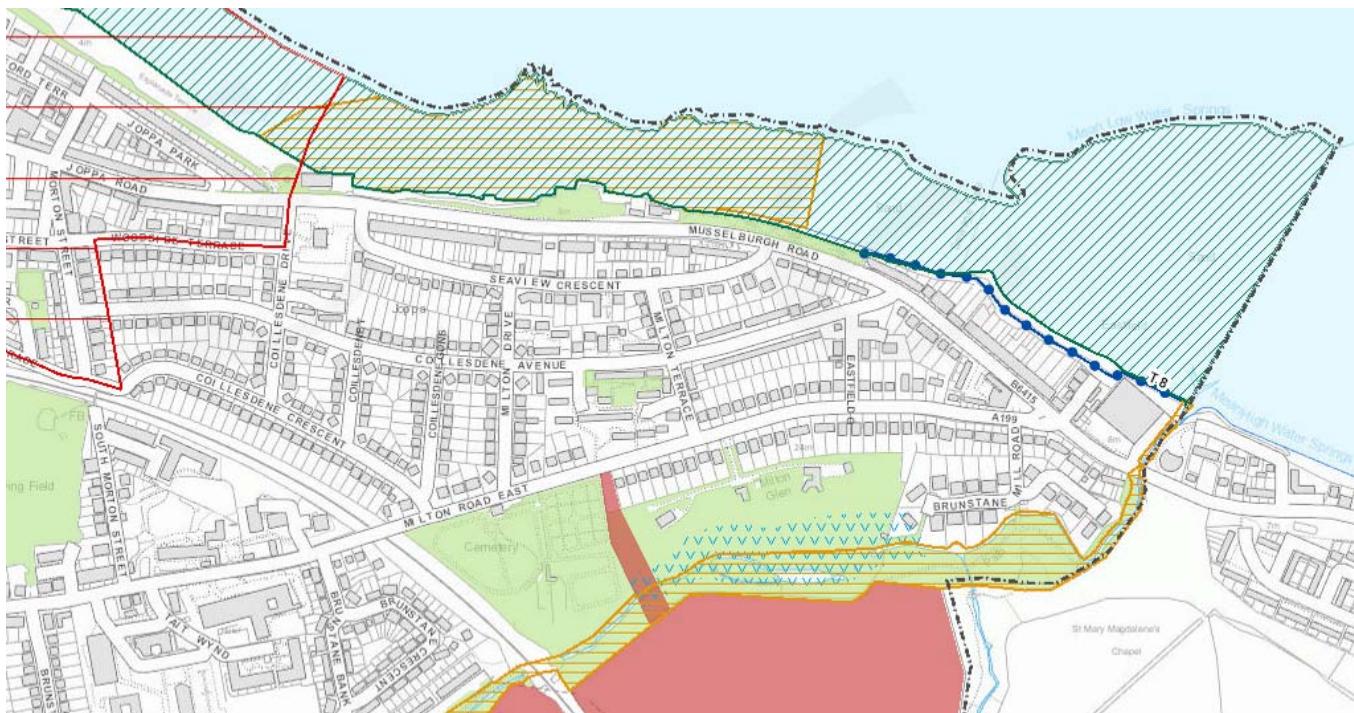
#### **Proposals**

##### **1 Joppa Square**

Enhance terminus to the Promenade. Promenade signage/information material. Improved access to beach, ramped to DDA standards. Cycle parking area, feature paving, planting.

Consider enhanced parking facilities and links signage to Musselburgh station.

Extract from the Edinburgh Waterfront Promenade



Extract from CEC Local Plan (2nd Proposed Plan June 2014)

## 2.3 Local Planning Context - Edinburgh

Encouragement of walking and cycling is at the heart of government and Council proposals to promote more sustainable travel, improve health and provide equally for people who for whatever reason do not own a car. Edinburgh has an extensive, highly attractive and, in some parts, relatively well connected off-road network based on abandoned railway alignments, paths along river banks and the canal towpath. Many of these are included in the Council's Core Paths Plan. In addition to existing well-established paths, the Core Paths Plan identifies opportunities for extensions and connections. This policy ensures that development proposals do not obstruct or damage existing cycle paths and footpaths and other routes with access rights and do not prejudice the future implementation of potential additions or improvements to off-road routes across the city.

### ***Edinburgh Local Development Plan - Edinburgh Waterfront Promenade***

The section of path that is missing between the Portobello Promenade and Musselburgh Promenade has been identified on the CEC Local Plan (2<sup>nd</sup> Proposed Plan June 2014) Proposals Map. The missing section is covered by **Policy Tra 8 Cycle and Footpath Network**, which states that planning permission will not be granted for development which would a) prevent the implementation of proposed cycle paths / footpaths shown on the Proposals Map or b) obstruct or adversely affect a public right of way or other route with access rights unless satisfactory provision is made for its replacement.

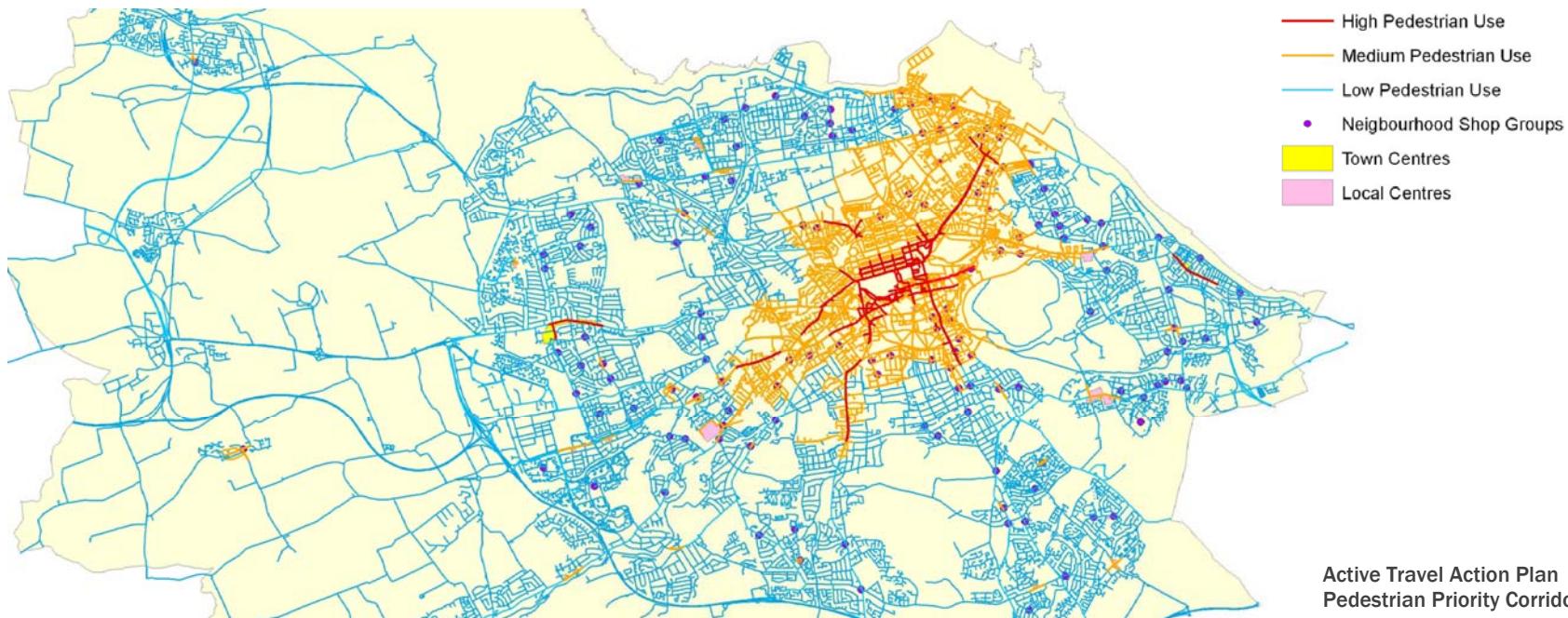
The Proposals Map shows proposed and potential cycle / footpath links and new access points. The proposed coastal footpath and cycle link at Joppa will only be supported if there are no adverse impacts on the nature conservation interests of the Firth of Forth Special Protection Area.

### ***Round the Forth Cycle Route***

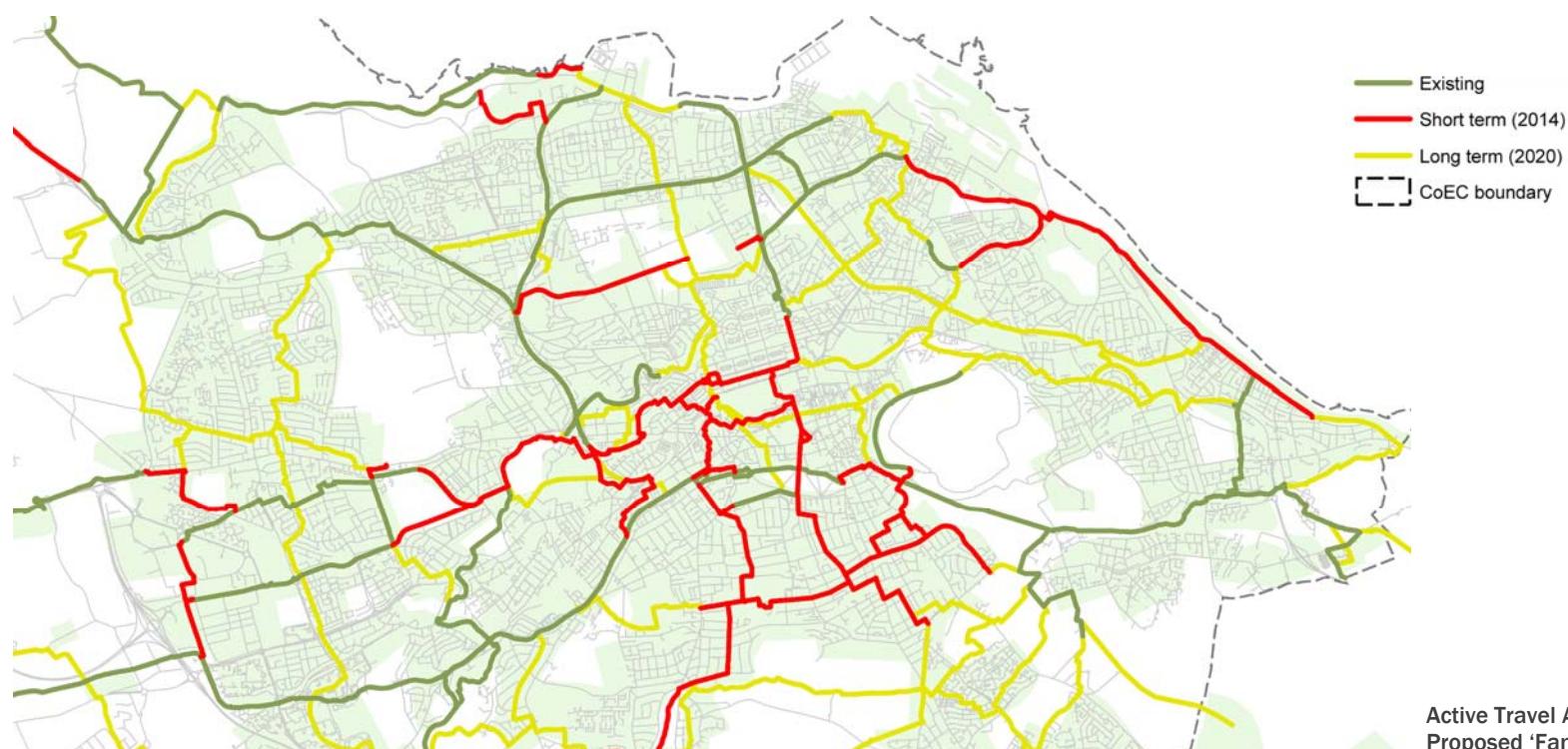
National Route 76 of the National Cycle Network runs from Berwick-upon-Tweed to Edinburgh, Stirling and Kirkcaldy, with the route on both sides of the Forth. Route 76 runs for 134 miles from Kirkcaldy to Dunbar, which is covered in the Round the Forth map, and continues southwards for another 34 miles to Berwick-upon-Tweed, covered in the Coasts and Castles South map. Much of the route on the south of the Forth is part of the John Muir Way which runs from Dunbar to Helensburgh (opened in April 2014). The section of the route follows the path round the sea side of the ash lagoons at Musselburgh, and then joins Route 1 to head through the centre of Edinburgh. Sustrans has long term aspirations to continue the route, following the coast, through Leith and beyond to the Dalmeny Estate in the west. The missing section of the promenade at Joppa is key to this long term aim.

### ***Edinburgh Waterfront Promenade Design Code 2007***

The Edinburgh Waterfront Promenade will form a continuous walkway/cycleway extending for almost 17km from Joppa in the east to Cramond in the west. The construction of a high quality Promenade will be one of the key signature projects of the Waterfront Development. It will link communities along the coast with each other and with adjoining communities providing a safe and attractive corridor for pedestrians and cyclists. The Promenade will be much more than simply a footpath and cycleway, as along the route a number of nodes will be developed that will act as destination points offering opportunities for recreation and entertainment facilities whilst respecting the coastline.



Active Travel Action Plan  
Pedestrian Priority Corridor and Areas



Active Travel Action Plan  
Proposed 'Family Network' of Cycle Routes

**Active Travel Action Plan (2010-2020), City of Edinburgh Council, 2010**

Active travel is at the heart of the Council's Transport 2030 Vision and Local Transport Strategy 2007-12 (LTS), as well as the Road Safety Plan for Edinburgh to 2020.

Walking and cycling have great benefits for health and accessibility. They can also reduce congestion and emissions when replacing short car journeys. Creating environments that are favourable to walking and cycling can improve overall quality of life in our cities, towns and villages. This plan is aimed at achieving these benefits by enabling and encouraging more people in Edinburgh to cycle and walk, more often and more safely and comfortably. Three-quarters of all trips made by Edinburgh residents are shorter than 5 km, a distance ideal for walking and cycling. However only 36% of residents' trips are made on foot or by bike, while 43% are made by car.

The core objective of the Active Travel Action Plan is to increase the numbers of people in Edinburgh walking and cycling, both as means of transport and for pleasure. The plan will seek to work towards its core objective by:

- Improving the city's walking and cycling infrastructure (maintenance, management, new provision, good design)
- Marketing of the opportunities to walk and cycle in the city (eg signing and mapping of cycle routes)
- Promoting walking and cycling (eg seeking to overcome social barriers to cycling)

Portobello Promenade is identified as one of the areas of Edinburgh which attracts high pedestrian use. Extending the route to Musselburgh may increase this use further.

The Travel Plan promotes the development of a Family Network, predominantly on quiet roads and off-street, aimed at feeling safe and secure for less confident cyclists including family groups and older unsupervised children.

**Routes on this network will aim for the same standard as the Sustrans National Cycle Network - that is, they should be suitable for use by an unaccompanied 12 year old. The Portobello to Musselburgh Link is identified in the Action Plan (Action C2) Portobello - Seafield - Leith - North Edinburgh path network link (NCN 76).**