

Masterplan will transform the area around Seafield

The council's planners and transport officers have drafted a masterplan to develop Seafield into a new neighbourhood where the city will look outwards to the Forth.

The area extends from Seafield Street to King's Road at Portobello and the plan is to continue the prom from Portobello westwards, with an emphasis on 2,700 new homes and leisure. The eastern boundary is the Forth and to the west the area is bounded by the railway line and Seafield Recreation Area. Detailed work will be carried out to determine the flood risk in the area and what mitigation measures might be taken.

This area which has always been the place to go and buy a car will be transformed with a new vision. Lothian Buses have their Marine Depot at the end of the parade of car showrooms and the council also owns the recycling centre nearby.

The project will include a new primary school, new GP surgery and a coastal park to mirror the one created at Granton. With better public transport and improved routes for walking and active travel this will be a much improved place to live and visit.

Cllr James Dalgleish the Planning Convener explained to journalists that this will become an environmentally friendly neighbourhood as well as more attractive. He said: "I think it is important to connect parts of the coastline and the surrounding communities including Leith to this new

development. One of the challenges in planning is trying to create new spaces and new opportunities, as well as trying to connect already pre-existing neighbourhoods.

“This will help us address the city’s housing emergency crisis with a range of housing on the site. We want this new neighbourhood to be a great place to invest in and to live in and it is important for me that this project isn’t just about housing. We must make sure there’s opportunity there for more employment, for community uses, as well as the community infrastructure which will be needed to support this new neighbourhood.”

This is the start of a longer term approach to developing the area and it will depend on the current landowners and any developers. The council owns part of the site, but not all and has denoted the various parts of the site with traffic lights signifying those which are ready for development straight away and others where development will take a bit longer.

The council has a “strong aspiration” to maintain the existing railway line with potential for rail access, but will also safeguard any opportunity to develop a new tram line in the area. The area has a great deal of history with a football team and stadium, and leisure gardens. But planning officers also regard this as an opportunity to improve the prom and facilities in Portobello.

A heat network would help the city to achieve its net zero target and will reduce bills for people living there.

The plans are being presented to councillors at the Planning Committee next week and if approved will proceed to a public consultation.

