

SITE & SURROUNDINGS

The Story of Cockenzie & Port Seton

Cockenzie and Port Seton are virtually synonymous. The two settlements have long merged into one another and on maps the whole phrase is used as a single name. These days it is fair to think of them as one large village with two harbours: Port Seton harbour being half a mile to the east of Cockenzie harbour.

Cockenzie was the first to be established. There had probably been a village around its natural harbour long before it was chartered as a burgh by James VI in 1591. It then grew as a convenient means of exporting the coal being unearthed around Tranent. Like nearby Prestonpans, it also became a centre for the extraction of salt from sea water in metal pans heated over coal fires.

The origins of Port Seton harbour lie a little inland at the tiny hamlet of Seton, where Seton Palace was built by the Setons in the early 1600s. The 11th Lord Seton built a harbour at what naturally became known as Port Seton in 1656. This grew primarily as a fishing harbour, though it also serviced the Setons' estates.

The Setons backed the Jacobite cause in the 1715 uprising and their estates in the area were forfeited. The York Building Company, which took over management of the estate's mining interests, built the Tranent Waggonway in 1722. This was a

horse-drawn railway carrying coal from the pits around Tranent to the harbour at Cockenzie.

During the 1745 Jacobite uprising the Battle of Prestonpans took place a mile south of Cockenzie and close to the line of the waggonway. History was made when the waggonway was used to transport troops to the battle, marking the railway's first ever use in warfare.

Cockenzie was also home for many years to boatyards producing fishing vessels and yachts. The sheds and slipways remain, but the last vessel was produced in the mid-1990s. Fishing remains important to the whole community. This is obvious from the harbours, unusual along this coast in being home to more working vessels than pleasure craft. The importance of fishing is also obvious from the continuing presence of traditional fish merchants and curers in the village.

The extraction of coal in the area impacted heavily on the developing of Cockenzie and Port Seton as well as Prestonpans. Extraction of coal began in the thirteenth century and continued up until the closure of Preston Links Colliery in the 1960s. The former colliery was reshaped to provide landscaping at Preston Links and to act as a fill for the reclamation of land from the Firth of Forth.

One of the more obvious recent developments took place in the 1960s when the Cockenzie Power Station was built on the coastal site of a disused coal mine just to the west of Cockenzie and Port Seton. The site was chosen to make use of the excellent coal supplies available locally, the good rail links, and the availability of seawater for cooling: hence the absence of cooling towers. The Power Station was built partly on the site of the former Preston Links Colliery, with northern elements of the site reclaimed from the Firth of Forth to facilitate construction.

Though the power station dominated westward views from the village, there were less attractive neighbours you could have had and the presence of the power station probably helped protect the communities here from being swamped by their proximity of Edinburgh, only a dozen miles to the west. As a result, the villages retain the sense of living and working places rather than dormitories. In many ways Cockenzie and Port Seton feel much more like the sort of fishing villages found on the coast of Aberdeenshire or Moray than somewhere right on the doorstep of Scotland's capital. Cockenzie Power Station was demolished in September 2015 and this now provides an opportunity to redevelop the site for the benefit of the local and wider community.



Site Context

The site needs to be considered within its broader context as well as the conditions contained within its boundary (Figure 1).

To the north, the site is bounded by the Firth of Forth, and immediately to the west and east are the settlements of Prestonpans, and Cockenzie and Port Seton respectively, and slightly further to the south, separated by a belt of open space, is the town of Tranent. Immediately to the south east of the site there is an allocation for a large new development at Blindwells, where 1,600 homes have been consented, with the potential for an expansion in the order of a further 4,400 homes providing a total of around 6,000 new homes. These three existing and future settlement areas have a significant influence on the Masterplan site and its potential for uses that service, support and enhance this part of East Lothian.

The site has a rich and varied history, and there are a number of features which the development has the opportunity to connect and enhance, including the coastal John Muir Way, the Waggonway leading from Cockenzie harbour to Tranent Churchyard, and the various sites associated with the Battle of Prestonpans and its various commemorative monuments and the adjacent battlefield viewpoint at Meadowmill.

The former Cockenzie Power Station also enjoyed a coastal context shaped by its geology and historic settlements. Physical features along the edge of the Firth of Forth include the volcanic plugs

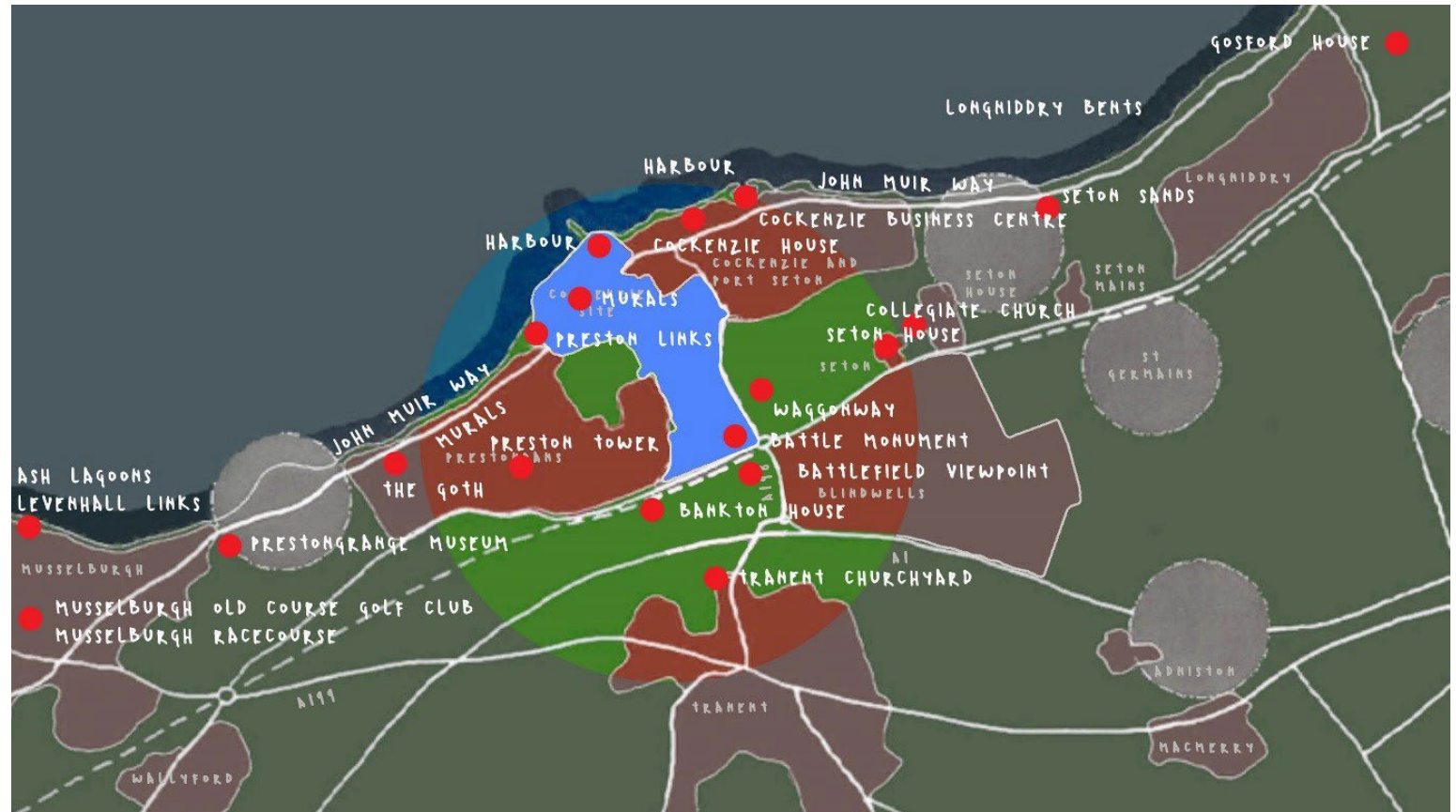


Figure 1: Site Context

at Edinburgh at the Castle Rock and Arthur's Seat, as well as the features at Traprain Law, Berwick Law and the Bass Rock, an indication of the lively and varied geomorphology along this coastal strip. Mineral outcrops including emerging coal seams attracted initial simple mining endeavours, and this became a focus for local industry as early as the twelfth century. Glassmaking, brewing, salt panning (giving the settlement its name – "Prestonpans" is derived from "Salt Priests town", acknowledging the industry carried out by incoming monks

from Newhailes), soap-making, brewing, fishing and mining were conducted here, leading to the creation of a large mine close to the former power station site.

Location and Site Plan

The former Cockenzie Power Station site and the area of land covered by the Masterplan is approximately 98 hectares (Figure 2). The site extends from the Firth of Forth coastline south to Meadowmill, Tranent. The site is located between the settlements of Cockenzie & Port Seton and Prestonpans in East Lothian.

Description

The site operated as a coal fired power station between 1968 and 2013 when it ceased production. The power station has been demolished. The site contains significant infrastructure assets in the form of a connection to the national grid, a railhead and a pier. The Cockenzie branch line railway, which was used to deliver coal to the former Cockenzie Power Station, runs into the site.

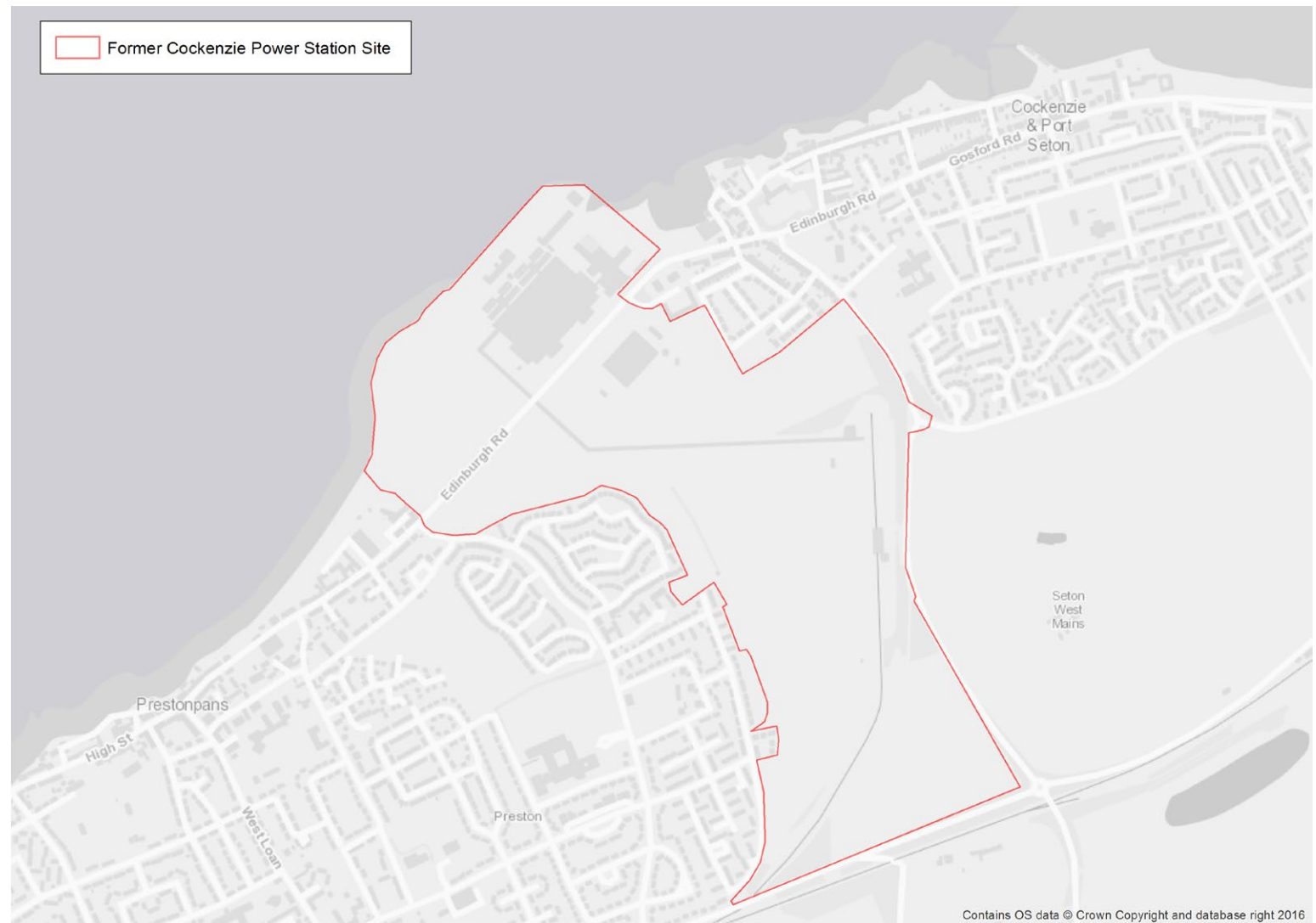
Ownership

The site and its surrounding land is owned by:

- Scottish Power Generation;
- Scottish Power Distribution;
- Scottish Gas Networks; and
- Crown Estate.

Planning Context

Through the National Planning Framework (NPF) 3, the Scottish Government has identified Cockenzie as a national development site for thermal energy generation as well as a location of significance for renewable energy. East Lothian Council is expected to reflect this national need in its emerging Local



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Figure 2: Site Location Plan

Development Plan by proposing land that could be used for energy.

As part of the LDP pre-Main Issues Report consultation, Scottish Power sent East Lothian Council the boundaries for the Cockenzie site that they own, proposing

that, in principle, future development of the site be for mixed-use that combines greenfield and brownfield space. This proposal is published in the Main Issues Report appendix for Prestonpans and informed the footprint for the Council's land allocation proposal.

Planning History

Over the last 6 years a number of planning applications have been submitted within the Masterplan area. These are described below:

2011

Consent was granted for conversion of Cockenzie Power Station from coal-fired to gas-fired generation. A new gas pipeline from East Fortune to the site was also consented. Scottish Power, the current owner of the site, confirmed in 2015 that it would not go ahead with this and would instead demolish the original power station building.

2014

Scottish Enterprise submitted a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) to the Council on 2 June 2014 for the development of an Energy Park. The PAN was a notice that Scottish Enterprise hoped to bring forward more detailed proposals for planning permission in principle. Scottish Enterprise confirmed on 30 March 2015 that it did not intend to continue with its proposals.

2014

On 2 September 2014 Inch Cape Offshore Ltd was granted planning permission in principle for the construction, operation and decommissioning of an onshore power station with infrastructure that would enable it to be linked to a proposed offshore wind farm (Inch Cape). The application was approved subject to a number of conditions. The conditions were put in place to protect the surrounding environment, minimise impacts on the road network, allow archaeological investigations and safeguard the local area for residents. In July 2016 the RSPB won a legal challenge in the Court of Session which ruled that the decision to approve the Inch Cape Offshore wind farm was unlawful due to concerns over the impact on seabird populations. The Scottish Government is currently appealing this decision.

2014

In November 2014, the Battle of Prestonpans Heritage Trust was granted planning permission to create a Field of Remembrance with stone table markers on the Battlefield site, which has previously been used as agricultural land, on land adjacent to the former power station.

2016

In November 2016 Inch Cape Offshore Limited submitted a Proposal of Application Notice to East Lothian Council to renew planning permission in principle for the onshore elements of Inch Cape Offshore Wind Farm.

Community Right-To-Buy

2016

The Coastal Regeneration Alliance (CRA) is a non-party-political Community Company. The CRA has developed a vision for the former Cockenzie Power Station site future combining retail, heritage and green space. The CRA's application to the Scottish Government for registration of a community interest in two parcels of land comprising Greenhills and the Battle of Prestonpans site currently owned by Scottish Power was refused by the relevant Minister. The CRA subsequently appealed the Scottish Government's decision under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 by way of a Summary Application to the Edinburgh Sheriff Court. The Sheriff in considering the matters subsequently issued a written judgement against the CRA's appeal. The CRA is currently considering their options for going forward.