

Chapter 6:

Woody Bay to Combe Martin

England Coast Path: Minehead to Combe Martin - Natural England's Proposals

Part 6.1: Introduction

Start Point:	Woody Bay (grid reference: SS 6770 4879)
End Point:	Combe Martin (grid reference: SS 5770 4723)
Relevant Maps:	6a to 6g

Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps:

The Trail:

- 6.1.1 Follows the existing South West Coast Path as currently walked and managed between Woody Bay and Lester Cliff, Combe Martin (route sections MCM-6-S001 to MCM-6-S030 and MCM-6-S034 to MCM-6-S037). The existing South West Coast Path generally follows public rights of way along this length although there are some parts that follow other existing walked routes for example at Girt Down and Holdstone Down (route sections MCM-6-S020 to MCM-6-S024). See maps 6a to 6g and associated table 6.2.1 below for more details.
- 6.1.2 Differs from the existing South West Coast Path at Combe Martin between route sections MCM-6-S031 and MCM-6-S033. This new length follows an existing walked route seaward of the existing South West Coast Path between Lester Cliff and Cobblers Park, with significantly improved views along the coastline and of Combe Martin and Combe Martin beach. See map 6g and associated table 6.2.2 below for details.
- 6.1.3 Passes through land that is excepted land under Schedule 1 to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) by virtue of it being land used as a park (route section MCM-6-S033). However, as this land is managed under another statutory power as open space by a local authority it is “accessible to the public by virtue of any enactment or rule of law”. This means the proposed alignment would be compliant with the Coastal Access Duty set out in section 296 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, even though the area remains excepted land.
- 6.1.4 The South West Coast Path generally follows the coast over this length and maintains good views of the sea. For the most part we propose adopting the walked line of this route as the line of the England Coast Path. However, there are places where we have proposed improvements to the existing route line (see paragraph 6.1.2), and furthermore there may be places where the walked line differs slightly from the route originally approved by the Secretary of State, as the path

has evolved over time to cope with coastal erosion and other processes. In both situations, as explained at part 5a of the Overview, assuming these proposals are approved we intend to use a separate variation report to the Secretary of State to change the route of the existing national trail to reflect the approved line of the England Coast Path insofar as the two are different.

6.1.5 This part of the coast includes the following sites, designated for nature conservation or heritage preservation (See map C of the Overview):

- Exmoor Heaths Special Area of Conservation (SAC);
- West Exmoor Coast and Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Exmoor Coastal Heaths Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Hele, Samson's and Combe Martin Bays Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Martinhoe Castle (Roman signal station) Scheduled Monument

6.1.6 We have assessed the potential impacts of access along the proposed route (and over the associated spreading room described below) on the features for which the affected land is designated and on any which are protected in their own right. The levels and patterns of public access along this length of coast would be unlikely to change significantly as a result of our proposals and we have therefore concluded that our proposals would not be likely to have any significant impact on these features.

In relation to those nature conservation sites listed above, refer to our published Access and Sensitive Features Appraisal for more information.

See part 5b of the Overview 'Natural environment' for more information.

Accessibility:

6.1.7 There are few artificial barriers to accessibility on the proposed route, which makes use of existing surface paths wherever these meet the criteria in the Coastal Access Scheme. However, there are places where it may not be suitable for people with reduced mobility because:

- The trail would follow an uneven grass or bare soil path, such as between route sections MCM-6-S001 and MCM-6-S004 and MCM-6-S009 to MCM-6-S033;
- There are challenging steep gradients in many places for example at Heddon's Mouth where it would be necessary to ascend or descend steep slopes.

See part 5a of the Overview 'Recreational issues' for more information.

Where we have proposed exercising our discretion:

6.1.8 Landward boundary of the coastal margin: We have used our discretion on some sections of the route to map the landward extent of the coastal margin to an adjacent physical boundary such as a fence line, pavement or track to make the extent of the new access rights clearer.

6.1.9 At Heddon's Mouth (route sections MCM-6-S001 to MCM-6-S005 and MCM-6-S009), East Cleave (route section MCM-6-S011), Holdstone Down (route section MCM-6-S015), Girt Down (route section MCM-6-S024) and Little Hangman (route section MCM-6-S025 to MCM-6-S028) we have used our discretion to propose the inclusion of an additional landward area of Open Access land within the coastal margin, to secure or enhance public enjoyment of this part of the coast. The owners of these areas of land are content for us to propose this. See maps 6a to 6e and the associated table 6.2.1 below for more detail.

See also part 3 of the Overview - 'Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps', for an explanation of the default extent of the coastal margin and how we may use our discretion to adjust the margin, either to add land or to provide clarity. See also Annex C of the Overview - 'Excepted land categories'.

6.1.10 Restrictions and/or exclusions: Access rights to the spreading room would be subject to the national restrictions on coastal access rights listed in Annex D of the Overview. These restrictions would not apply to public rights of way. We have not used our discretion to propose any additional restrictions or exclusions on this part of the coast.

See part 9 of the Overview - 'Restrictions and exclusions' - for details.

Establishment and ongoing management of the trail

6.1.11 Where the trail follows the existing South West Coast Path as currently walked and managed, there are no additional measures that we consider necessary to improve the safety or convenience of the trail on this length of coast.

6.1.12 For the new section in Combe Martin (route sections MCM-6-031 to MCM-6-033) some physical establishment of the trail would be necessary, in accordance with the general approach described in part 6 the Overview. This would include altering the entry point to Cobbler's Park to make it wider and more accessible, grading and surfacing the new path as it goes through Cobbler's Park and grading the path through the scrub to make a sustainable and level surface for users.

6.1.13 Ongoing management and maintenance would be necessary in accordance with the general approach described in part 7 of the Overview. The overall need for this is likely to be greater than on some other parts of the stretch, recognising that it will be necessary for the route to roll back from time to time in response to coastal processes, as described below.

See parts 6 'Physical establishment of the trail' and 7 'Maintenance of the trail' of the Overview for more information.

Future Change:

6.1.14 Part of the route of the trail on this length of coast would be able to change without further approval from the Secretary of State in response to coastal erosion or other geomorphological processes, or encroachment by the sea. This would happen in accordance with the criteria and procedures for 'roll back' set out in part 8 of the Overview. See tables 6.2.1 and 6.2.2 below for details of the sections that may be affected in the foreseeable future.

6.1.15 At the time of preparing the report, we do not foresee any other need for future changes to the access provisions proposed for the length of coast described in this chapter.

See parts 5e 'Coastal processes' and 8 'Future changes' of the Overview for more information.

Part 6.2: Commentary on the maps

See part 3 of Overview for guidance on reading and understanding the tables below

Table 6.2.1 includes sections of the trail that follow the existing South West Coast Path as currently walked and managed. Table 6.2.2 includes sections of the trail that differs from the existing South West Coast Path.

6.2.1 Details for sections that follow the existing South West Coast Path: Maps 6a to 6g, Woody Bay to Combe Martin

Notes on table:

Column 2 – an asterisk (*) against the route section number means see also table 6.2.3: Other options considered.

Column 3 – ‘Yes – normal’ means roll-back approach is likely to follow the current feature (e.g. cliff edge/beach) for the foreseeable future.

Column 3 – ‘Yes – see table 6.2.4’ means refer to that table below about our likely approach to roll-back on this part of the route.

1	2	3	4a	4b	5
Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Roll-back proposed? (See part 8 of Overview)	Landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary discretion	Proposed exclusions or restrictions (see part 9 of Overview)
6a	MCM-6-S001* to MCM-6-S005*	Yes - normal	Various	Additional landward area	None
	MCM-6-S006	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	MCM-6-S007	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
6b	MCM-6-S008	Yes - normal	Track	Clarity and cohesion	None
	MCM-6-S009*	Yes - normal	Various	Additional landward area	None
6b and 6c	MCM-6-S010	Yes - normal	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	None
6c	MCM-6-S011*	Yes - normal	Fence line	Additional landward area	None
	MCM-6-S012	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	MCM-6-S013	Yes - normal	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	None
6d	MCM-6-S014	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	MCM-6-S015*	Yes - normal	Road	Additional landward area	None
	MCM-6-S016 to MCM-6-S018	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
6d and 6e	MCM-6-S019	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
6e	MCM-6-S020 to MCM-6-S023	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	MCM-6-S024*	Yes - normal	Fence line	Additional landward area	None
	MCM-6-S025*	Yes - normal	Fence line	Additional landward area	None
6g	MCM-6-S026* to MCM-6-S028*	Yes - normal	Fence line	Additional landward area	None
	MCM-6-S029 and MCM-6-S030	Yes - normal	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	None
	See table 6.2.2 for sections that differ from the existing South West Coast Path				
	MCM-6-S034	No	Path	Clarity and cohesion	None
	MCM-6-S035	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	MCM-6-S036	No	Road	Clarity and cohesion	None
	MCM-6-S037	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	None

6.2.2 Details for sections that differ from the existing South West Coast Path – Map 6g, The Rawn’s to Combe Martin

Notes on table 6

Column 2 – an asterisk (*) against the route section number means see also table 6.2.3: Other options considered.

Column 5 – ‘Yes – normal’ means roll-back approach is likely to follow the current feature (e.g. cliff edge/beach) for the foreseeable future.

Column 5 – ‘Yes – see table 6.2.4’ means refer to that table below about our likely approach to roll-back on this part of the route.

1	2	3	4	5	6a	6b	7
Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Current status of this section	Current surface of this section	Roll-back proposed? (See Part 8 of Overview)	Landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary discretion	Proposed exclusions or restrictions (see Part 9 of Overview)
6g	MCM-6-S031* and MCM-6-S032*	Other existing walked route	Bare soil (compacted)	Yes – see table 6.2.4	Path	Clarity and cohesion	None
	MCM-6-S033*	Other existing walked route	Grass	Yes – see table 6.2.4	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None

6.2.3 Other options considered: Maps 6a to 6g, Woody Bay to Combe Martin

Map(s)	Section number(s)	Option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option as the route
6g	MCM-6-S031 to MCM-6-S033	We considered aligning the trail along the existing South West Coast Path to the landward side of the residential area adjacent to Cobblers Park, Combe Martin.	We opted for the proposed route because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is closer to the sea and offers significantly improved and extensive views over Combe Martin, the beach and along the adjacent coastline. The existing South West Coast Path follows a path to the landward side of a residential area with intermittent views of the sea; The route currently followed by the existing South West Coast Path between Lester Cliff and Combe Martin is a public footpath and can still be used by anyone not wishing to follow the more seaward route; We concluded that overall the proposed route struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme
6a to 6g	MCM-6-S001 to MCM-6-S005, MCM-6-S009, MCM-6-S011, MCM-6-S015, MCM-6-S024 to MCM-6-S028	We considered various options in relation to landward extent of margin over existing CROW access land in consultation with the relevant owners and occupiers.	We opted for the proposed extent of landward margin because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> we concluded that this would strike the best balance in terms of the criteria described in section 4.8 of the Coastal Access Scheme – to make the extent of people’s access rights clearer or more cohesive on the ground. Our decision was made to best suit the local circumstances and after having taken into consideration the views of the relevant owners and occupiers to either include or exclude additional CROW access land as part of the coastal margin.

6.2.4 Roll-back implementation – more complex situations

Map(s)	Section number(s)	Feature or site potentially affected	How we will manage roll-back in relation to this feature or site
6g	MCM-6-S031 to MCM-6-S033	Combe Martin	If it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of any houses or gardens or other excepted land, we will choose a new route on the landward side after detailed discussions with all relevant interests. In reaching this judgement we will have full regard to the need to seek a fair balance between the interests of potentially affected owners and occupiers and those of the public.

In relation to all other sections where roll-back has been proposed, the trail is likely to be adjusted to follow the current feature (e.g. cliff edge/beach) for the foreseeable future.

Part 6.3: Chapter 6 - Formal Proposals

- Below are our formal proposals to the Secretary of State for the length of coast shown on maps 6a to 6g.
- They should be read in conjunction with the relevant maps.
- The commentary above explains the practical effect of these proposals.

Formal Proposals – Woody Bay to Combe Martin

Proposed route of the trail

- 6.3.1 In relation to route sections MCM-6-S001 to MCM-6-S033, the route, as initially determined at the time the report was prepared, is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps 6a to 6g as the proposed route of the trail.
- 6.3.2 If at any time any part of a route section listed in the previous paragraph needs, in Natural England's view, to change as a result of coastal erosion or other geomorphological processes or encroachment by the sea, in order for the overall route to remain viable, the new route for the part in question will be determined by Natural England without further reference to the Secretary of State. This will be done in accordance with the criteria and procedures described under the title 'Roll-back' in part 8 of the Overview and section 4.10 of the Coastal Access Scheme. If this happens, the new route will become the approved route for that section for the purposes of the Order which determines where coastal access rights apply.
- 6.3.3 In relation to route sections MCM-6-S034 to MCM-6-S037, the route is to be at the centre of the line shown on map 6g as the proposed route of the trail.

Landward boundary of coastal margin

- 6.3.4 Adjacent to route sections MCM-6-S001 to MCM-6-S005 and MCM-6-S009, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with various boundary features, as indicated by the coastal margin landward of the trail on maps 6a and 6b.
- 6.3.5 Adjacent to route section MCM-6-S008, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the track shown as the trail on map 6b.
- 6.3.6 Adjacent to route section MCM-6-S010, MCM-6-S013, MCM-6-S029 and MCM-6-S030, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the fence line shown as the trail on maps 6b, 6c and 6g.
- 6.3.7 Adjacent to route sections MCM-6-S011 and MCM-6-S024 to MCM-6-S028, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the existing fence line, as indicated by the coastal margin landward of the trail on maps 6c and 6e to 6g.
- 6.3.8 Adjacent to route section MCM-6-S015, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the existing road, as indicated by the coastal margin landward of the trail on map 6d.

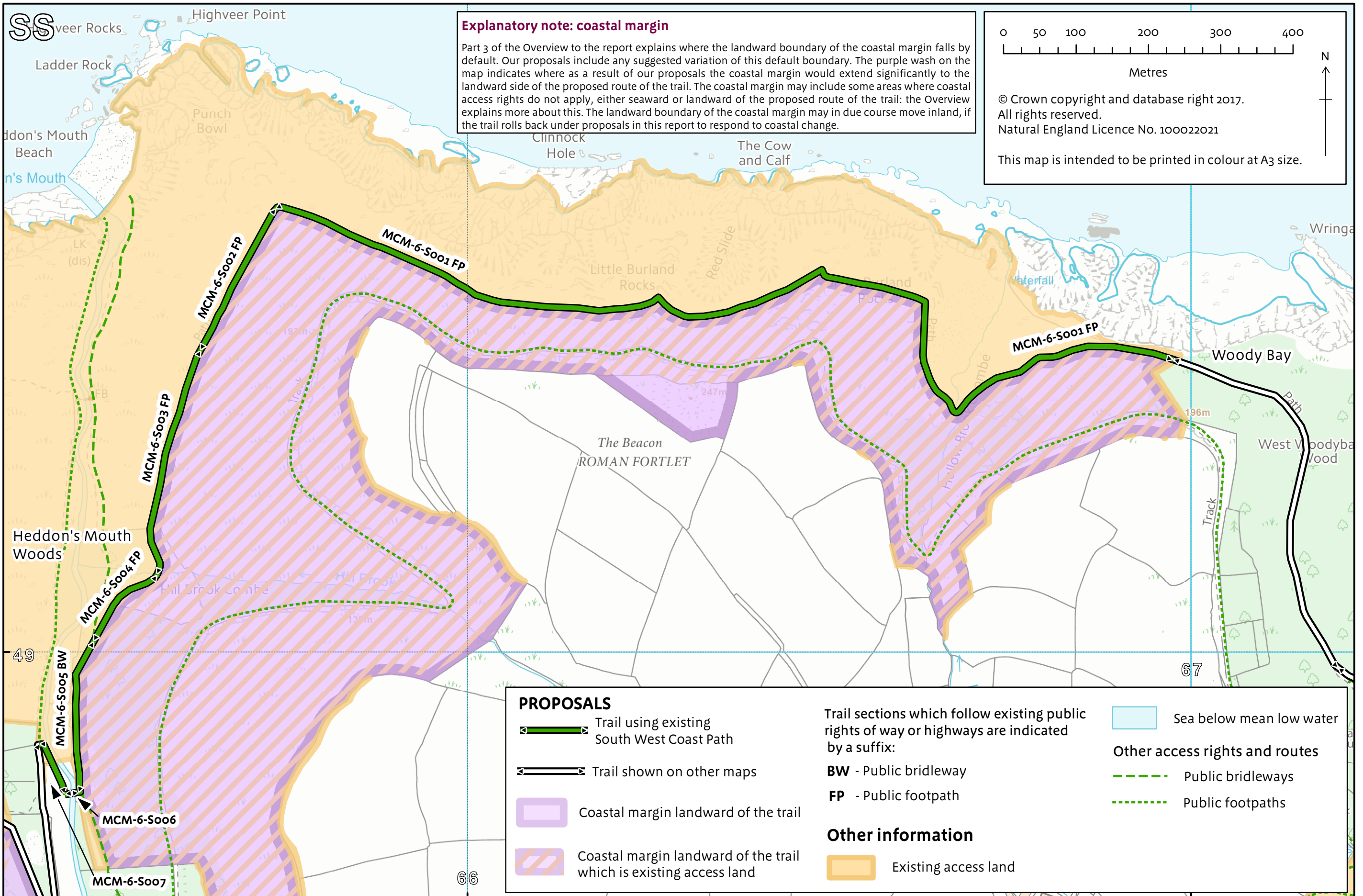
- 6.3.9 Adjacent to route sections MCM-6-S031, MCM-6-S032 and MCM-6-S034, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the path shown as the trail on map 6g.
- 6.3.10 Adjacent to route section MCM-6-S036, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the road shown as the trail on map 6g.
- 6.3.11 Adjacent to route section MCM-6-S037, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the pavement shown as the trail on map 6g.

Local restrictions and exclusions

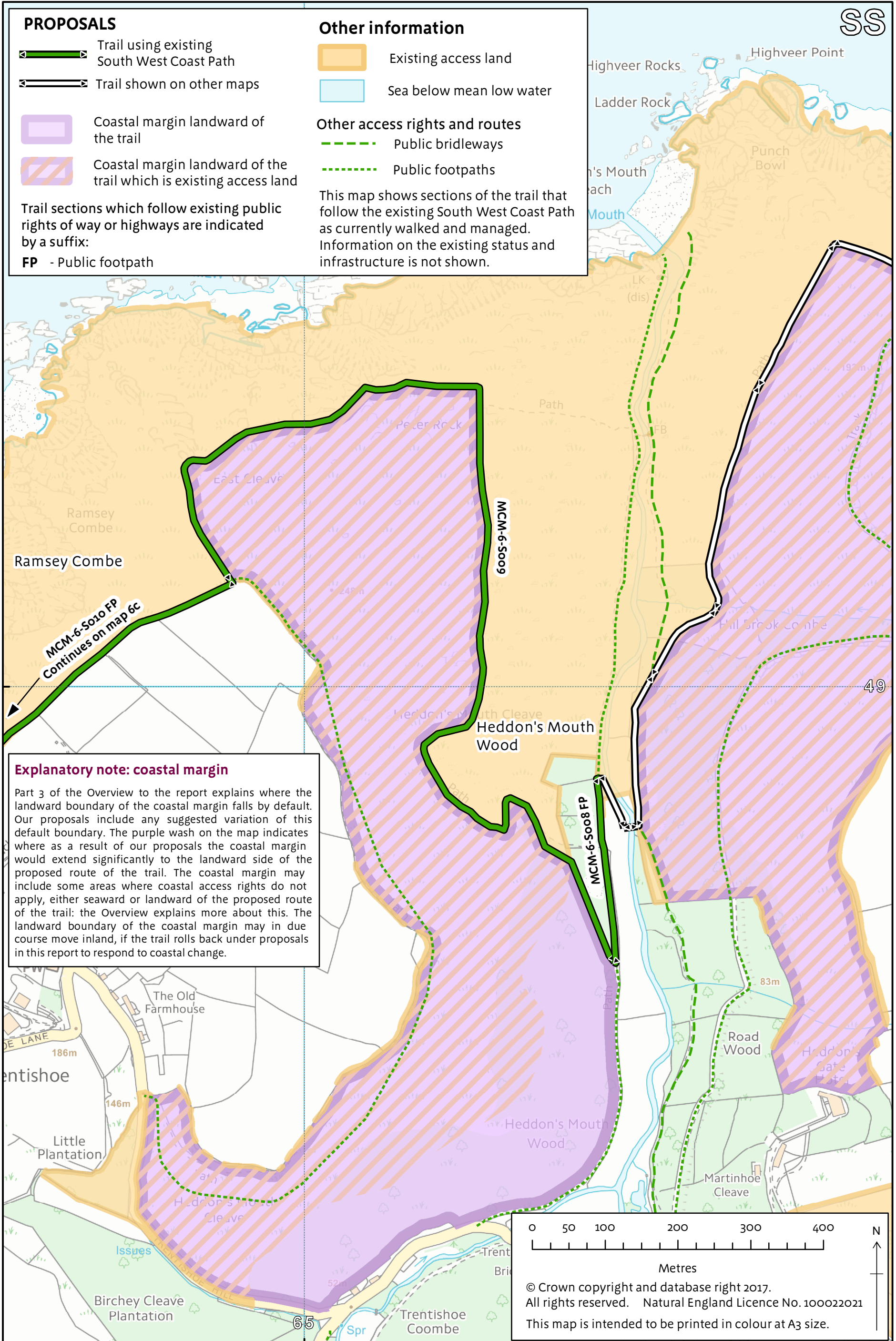
- 6.3.12 At the time of writing this report, there are no proposals for local restrictions or exclusions in relation to this length of coast.

Alternative routes


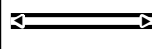

- 6.3.13 There are no proposals for alternative routes in relation to this length of coast.



Map 6a Woody Bay to Heddon's Mouth Wood




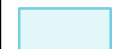
PROPOSALS

-  Trail using existing South West Coast Path
-  Trail shown on other maps
-  Coastal margin landward of the trail which is existing access land


Trail sections which follow existing public rights of way or highways are indicated by a suffix:

FP - Public footpath

Other information

-  Existing access land
-  Sea below mean low water

Other access rights and routes

-  Public footpaths

This map shows sections of the trail that follow the existing South West Coast Path as currently walked and managed. Information on the existing status and infrastructure is not shown.

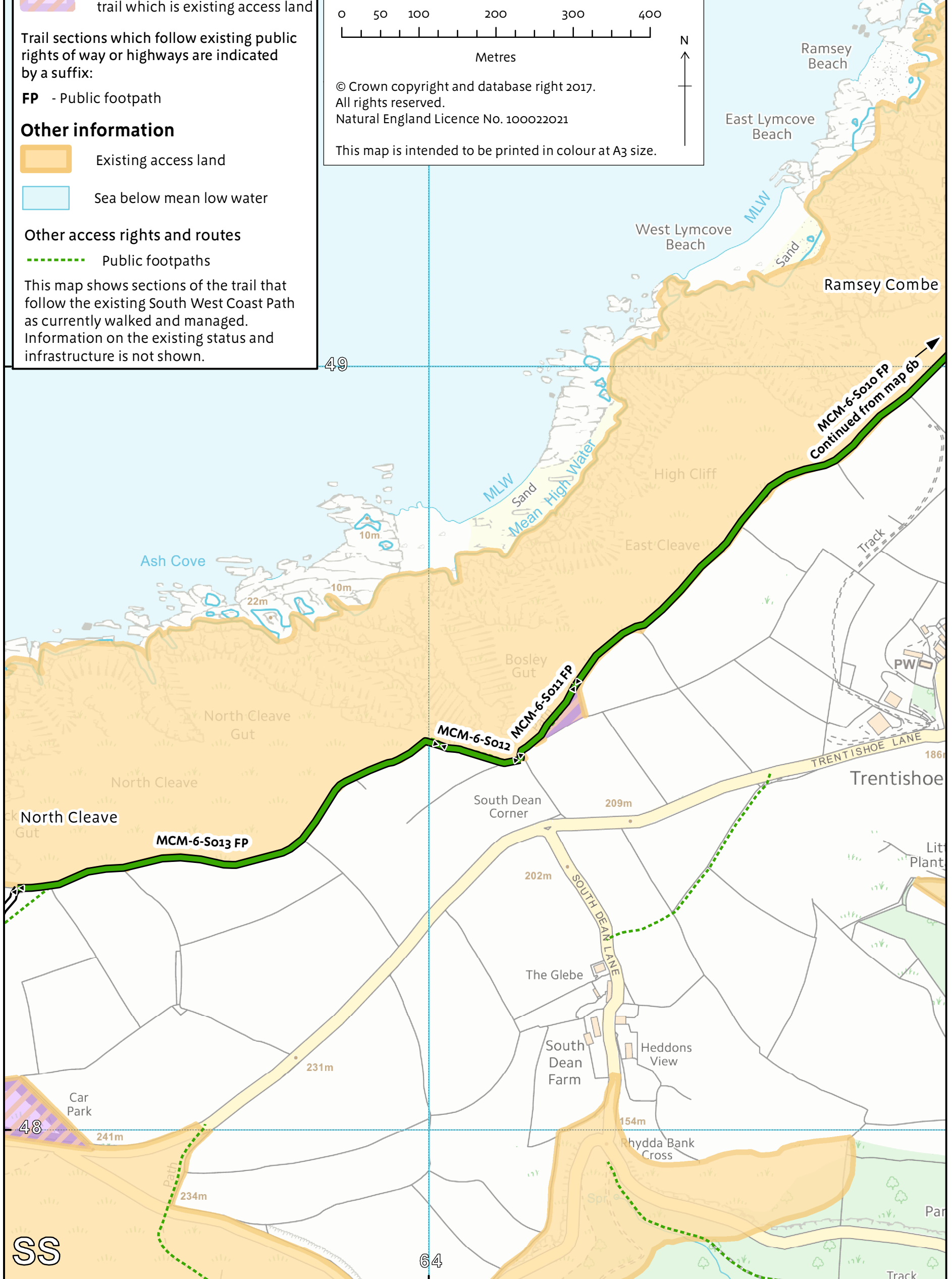
Explanatory note: coastal margin

Part 3 of the Overview to the report explains where the landward boundary of the coastal margin falls by default. Our proposals include any suggested variation of this default boundary. The purple wash on the map indicates where as a result of our proposals the coastal margin would extend significantly to the landward side of the proposed route of the trail. The coastal margin may include some areas where coastal access rights do not apply, either seaward or landward of the proposed route of the trail: the Overview explains more about this. The landward boundary of the coastal margin may in due course move inland, if the trail rolls back under proposals in this report to respond to coastal change.


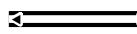

0 50 100 200 300 400
Metres

© Crown copyright and database right 2017.
All rights reserved.
Natural England Licence No. 100022021

This map is intended to be printed in colour at A3 size.




PROPOSALS

-  Trail using existing South West Coast Path
-  Trail shown on other maps
-  Coastal margin landward of the trail which is existing access land

Trail sections which follow existing public rights of way or highways are indicated by a suffix:


FP - Public footpath

Other information

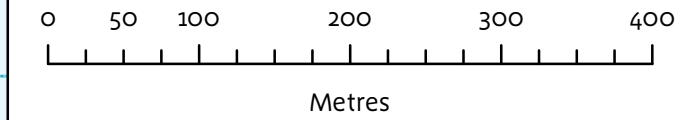
 Existing access land

 Sea below mean low water

Other access rights and routes

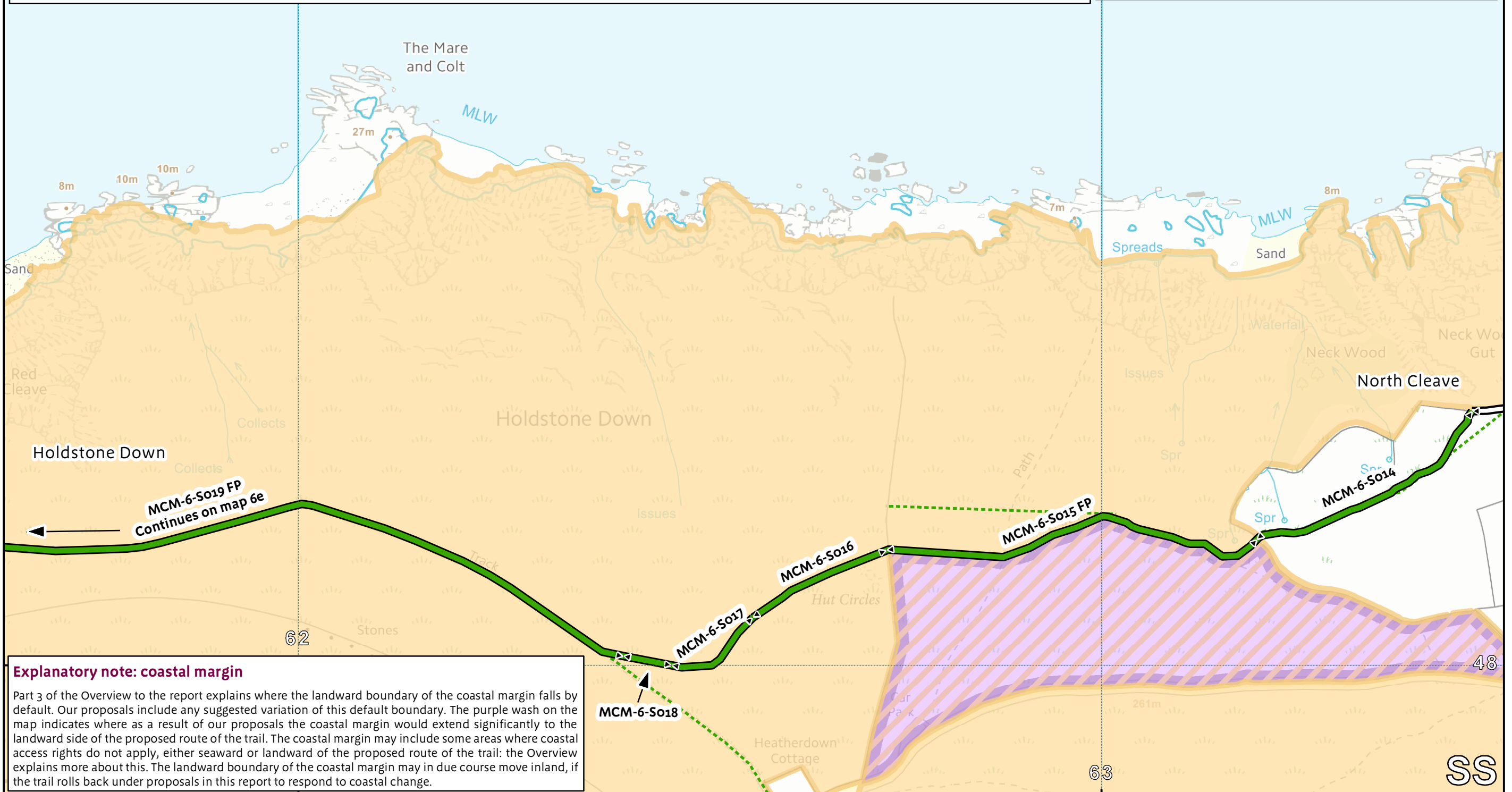
 Public footpaths

This map shows sections of the trail that follow the existing South West Coast Path as currently walked and managed. Information on the existing status and infrastructure is not shown.



© Crown copyright and database right 2017.
All rights reserved.
Natural England Licence No. 100022021

This map is intended to be printed in colour at A3 size.



Explanatory note: coastal margin

Part 3 of the Overview to the report explains where the landward boundary of the coastal margin falls by default. Our proposals include any suggested variation of this default boundary. The purple wash on the map indicates where as a result of our proposals the coastal margin would extend significantly to the landward side of the proposed route of the trail. The coastal margin may include some areas where coastal access rights do not apply, either seaward or landward of the proposed route of the trail: the Overview explains more about this. The landward boundary of the coastal margin may in due course move inland, if the trail rolls back under proposals in this report to respond to coastal change.

Explanatory note: coastal margin

Part 3 of the Overview to the report explains where the landward boundary of the coastal margin falls by default. Our proposals include any suggested variation of this default boundary. The purple wash on the map indicates where as a result of our proposals the coastal margin would extend significantly to the landward side of the proposed route of the trail. The coastal margin may include some areas where coastal access rights do not apply, either seaward or landward of the proposed route of the trail: the Overview explains more about this. The landward boundary of the coastal margin may in due course move inland, if the trail rolls back under proposals in this report to respond to coastal change.

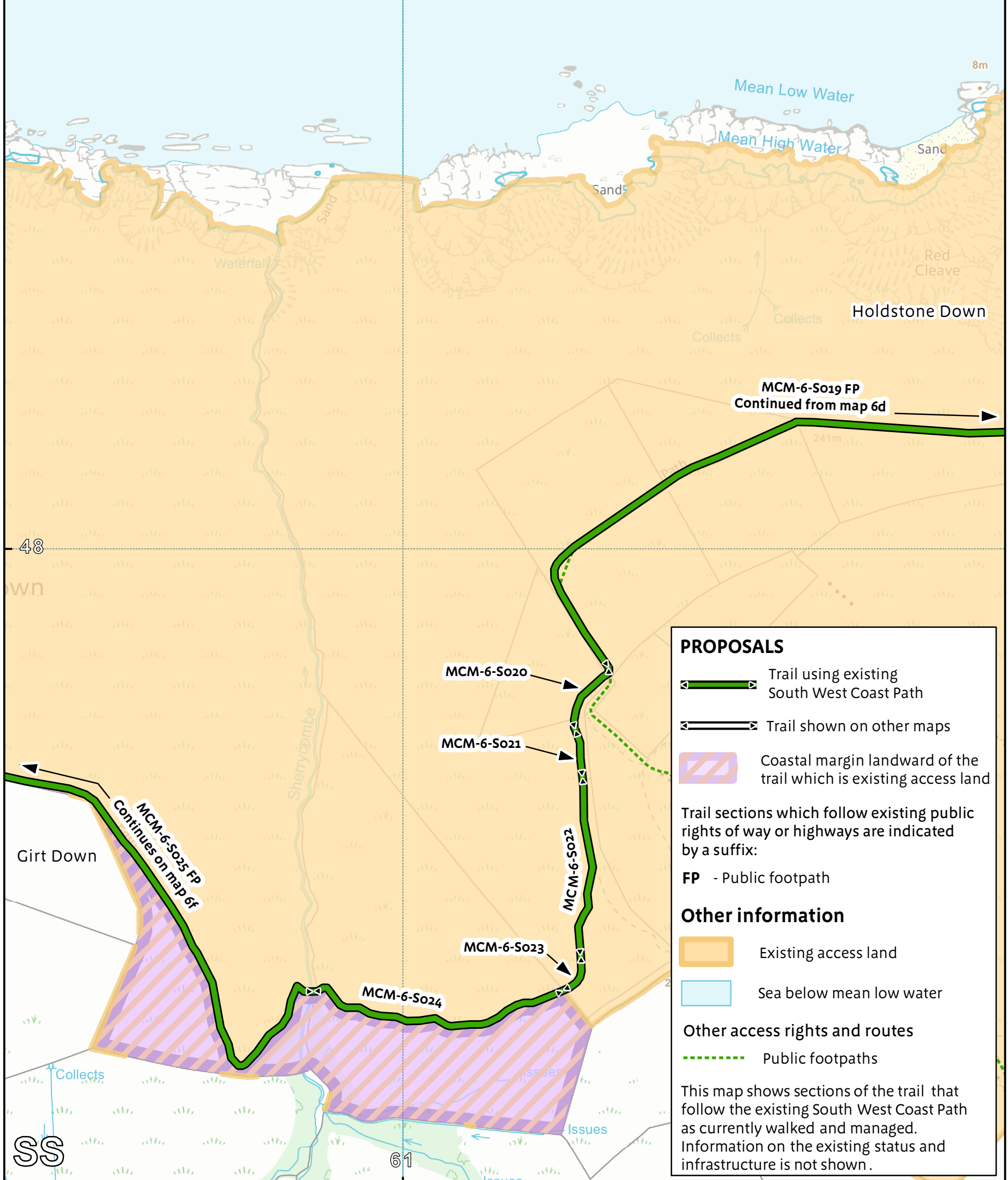
0 50 100 200 300 400

Metres



© Crown copyright and database right 2017.
All rights reserved.
Natural England Licence No. 100022021

This map is intended to be printed in colour at A3 size.



PROPOSALS

- Trail using existing South West Coast Path
- Trail shown on other maps
- Coastal margin landward of the trail which is existing access land

Trail sections which follow existing public rights of way or highways are indicated by a suffix:



FP - Public footpath

Other information

- Existing access land
- Sea below mean low water
- Other access rights and routes**
- Public footpaths

This map shows sections of the trail that follow the existing South West Coast Path as currently walked and managed. Information on the existing status and infrastructure is not shown.


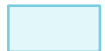
PROPOSALS

-  Trail using existing South West Coast Path
-  Coastal margin landward of the trail which is existing access land


Trail sections which follow existing public rights of way or highways are indicated by a suffix:

FP - Public footpath

Other information

-  Existing access land
-  Sea below mean low water

Other access rights and routes

-  Public footpaths

This map shows sections of the trail that follow the existing South West Coast Path as currently walked and managed. Information on the existing status and infrastructure is not shown.

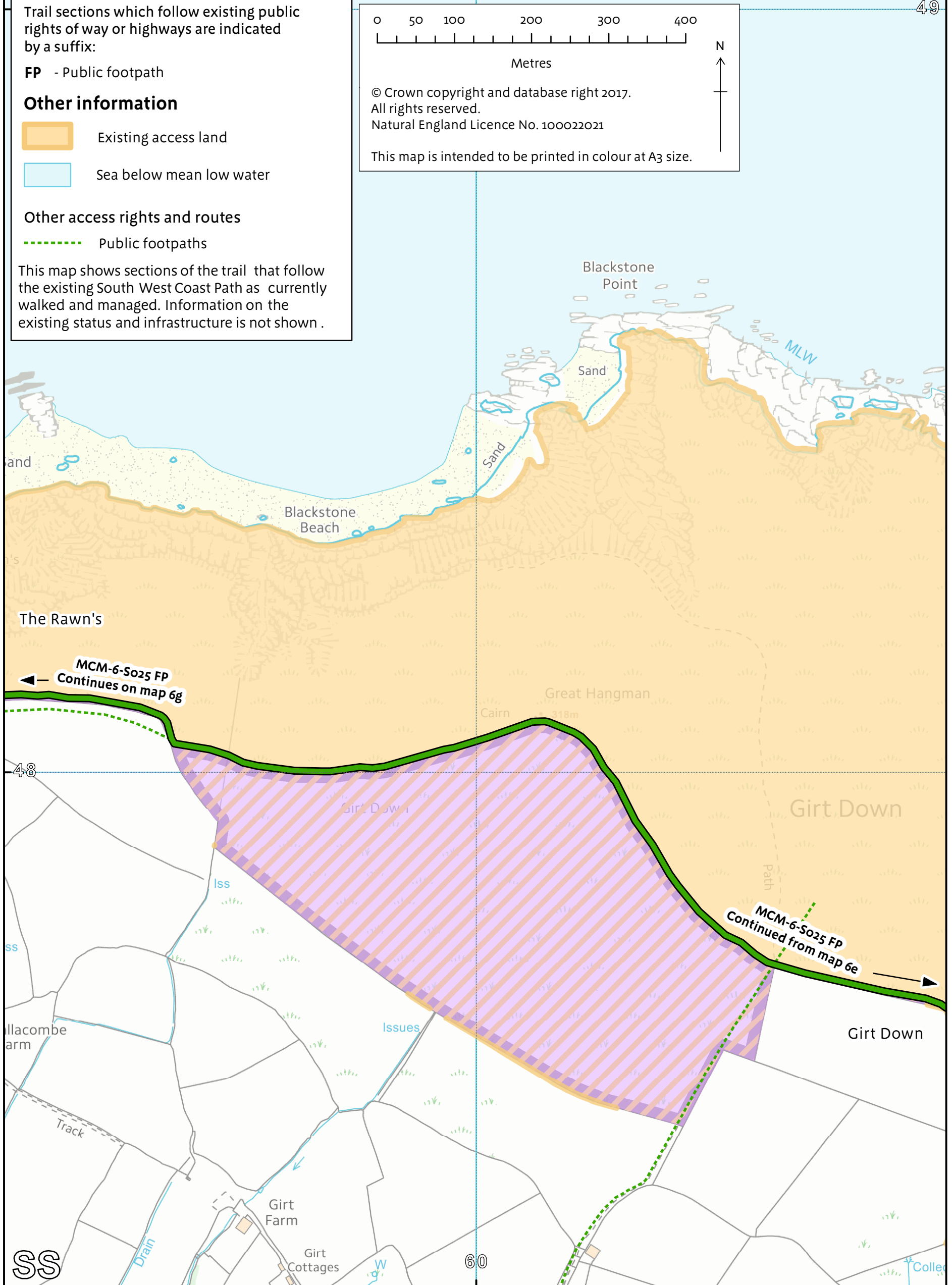
Explanatory note: coastal margin

Part 3 of the Overview to the report explains where the landward boundary of the coastal margin falls by default. Our proposals include any suggested variation of this default boundary. The purple wash on the map indicates where as a result of our proposals the coastal margin would extend significantly to the landward side of the proposed route of the trail. The coastal margin may include some areas where coastal access rights do not apply, either seaward or landward of the proposed route of the trail: the Overview explains more about this. The landward boundary of the coastal margin may in due course move inland, if the trail rolls back under proposals in this report to respond to coastal change.

0 50 100 200 300 400
Metres

© Crown copyright and database right 2017.
All rights reserved.
Natural England Licence No. 100022021

This map is intended to be printed in colour at A3 size.



49

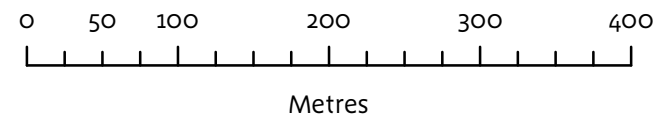
48

60

SS

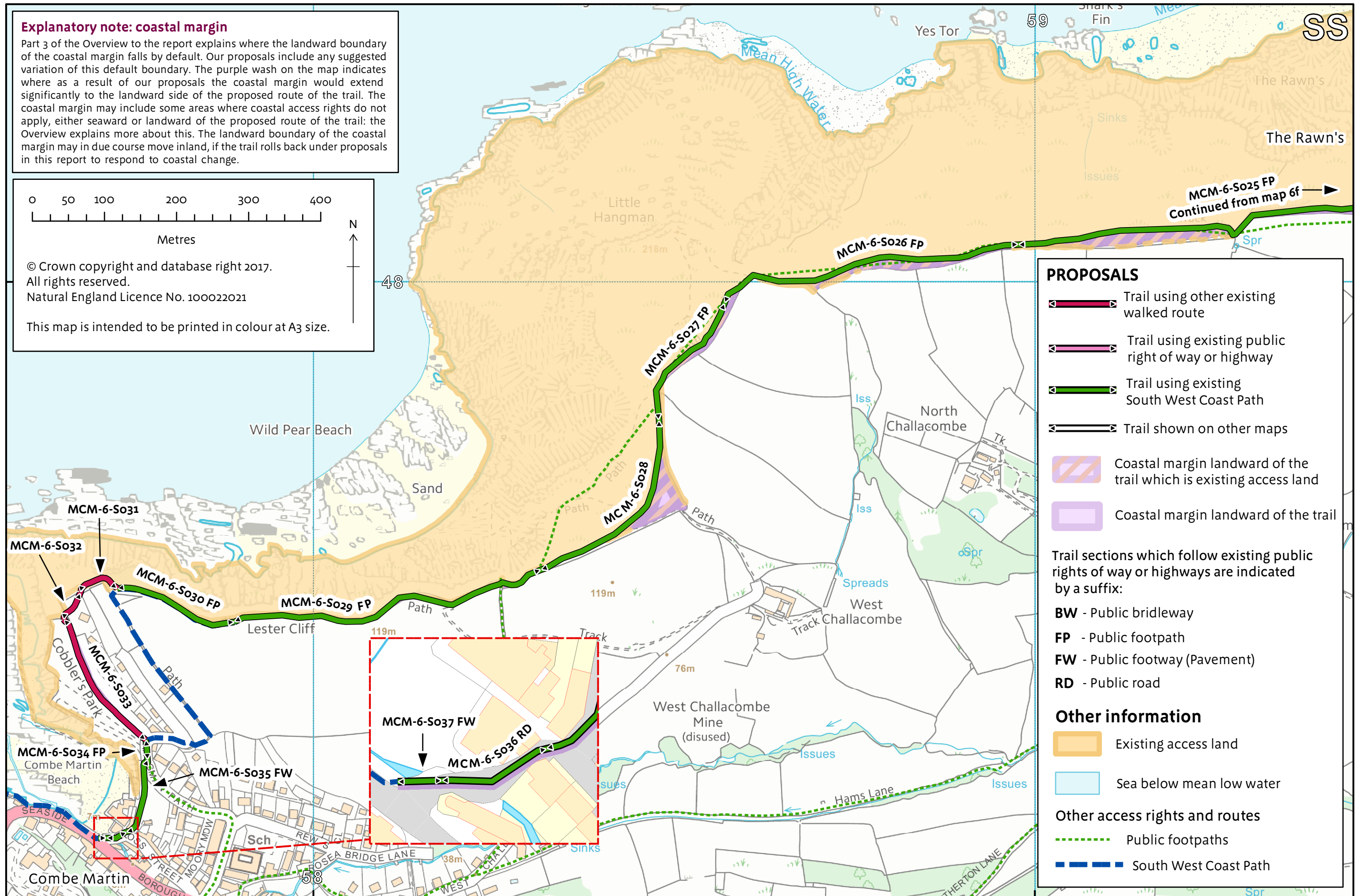
Explanatory note: coastal margin

Part 3 of the Overview to the report explains where the landward boundary of the coastal margin falls by default. Our proposals include any suggested variation of this default boundary. The purple wash on the map indicates where as a result of our proposals the coastal margin would extend significantly to the landward side of the proposed route of the trail. The coastal margin may include some areas where coastal access rights do not apply, either seaward or landward of the proposed route of the trail: the Overview explains more about this. The landward boundary of the coastal margin may in due course move inland, if the trail rolls back under proposals in this report to respond to coastal change.



© Crown copyright and database right 2017.
All rights reserved.
Natural England Licence No. 100022021

This map is intended to be printed in colour at A3 size.



PROPOSALS

- Trail using other existing walked route
- Trail using existing public right of way or highway
- Trail using existing South West Coast Path
- Trail shown on other maps
- Coastal margin landward of the trail which is existing access land
- Coastal margin landward of the trail

Trail sections which follow existing public rights of way or highways are indicated by a suffix:

- BW** - Public bridleway
- FP** - Public footpath
- FW** - Public footway (Pavement)
- RD** - Public road

Other information

- Existing access land
- Sea below mean low water
- Public footpaths
- South West Coast Path

Map 6g The Rawn's to Combe Martin