

Chapter 7:

# Mudford Quay to Chewton Bunny

England Coast Path: Kimmeridge to Highcliffe - Natural England's Proposals

## Part 2.1: Introduction

<b>Start Point:</b>	<b>Mudford Quay</b> (grid reference: SZ 1830 9159)
<b>End Point:</b>	<b>Chewton Bunny</b> (grid reference: SZ 2177 9315)
<b>Relevant Maps:</b>	<b>7a to 7c</b>

### Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps:

#### The Trail:

- 7.1.1 Follows existing walked routes throughout including promenades and public rights of way.
- 7.1.2 Follows the coastline and maintains good views of the sea.
- 7.1.3 Is aligned on the beach or foreshore along the base of Highcliffe Cliffs between Steamer Point Woodland and eastern end of Highcliffe Castle grounds. See table 7.2.2 for details of other route options considered here.
- 7.1.4 This part of the coast includes the following sites, designated for nature conservation, geological or heritage preservation (see map C of the Overview):
  - Solent and Dorset proposed Marine Special Protection Area (SPA)
  - Highcliffe to Milford Cliffs Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its geological interest
- 7.1.5 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.

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

## Accessibility:

- 7.1.6 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 along section LCH-7-SO11 the trail may not be entirely suitable for people with reduced mobility, as it follows the sandy foreshore for approximately 1km.
- 7.1.7 There is an existing walked path that ascends to Highcliffe Castle (from the junction of route section LCH-7-S009/S010 to the junction of LCH-7-S011/S012) which is accessible in daylight hours. We will work with Dorset County Council and Christchurch and East Dorset Councils to promote this alternative but it would not form part of the designated trail. Table 7.2.2 explains the reasons for our choice.
- 7.1.8 Between section LCH-7-S004 and LCH-7-S005 (map 7a) on the promenade near Mudeford car park, public access may be interrupted at times of storms and high tides. There is an option to follow a route landward of and parallel to the low seawall to avoid the section between the flood gates. This alternative would be available for the public to use if necessary but would not form part of the designated trail under our proposals. Table 7.2.2 explains the reasons for this choice.

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

## Where we have proposed exercising our discretion:

The discretions referred to below are explained in more detail in part 3 of the Overview.

- 7.1.9 Estuary: This report proposes that the trail should include a route around the estuary of the rivers Stour and Avon, extending upstream from the open coast as far as Tuckton Bridge which is the first public foot crossing point over the river Stour and Town and Waterloo Bridges on the River Avon (see part 10 of the Overview). The trail covered by this chapter includes part of this estuary route (see maps 7a and b).
- 7.1.10 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. See Table 7.2.1 below.

**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'.**

- 7.1.11 Restrictions and/or exclusions: Access rights to the spreading room would be subject to the national restrictions on coastal access listed in Annex D of the Overview. These restrictions would not apply to public rights of way.

**See part 11 of the Overview - 'Restrictions and exclusions' - for details.**

### **Establishment and ongoing management of the trail:**

- 7.1.12 Establishment: this length of trail is in good condition.
- 7.1.13 Improved directional signage will be installed prior to opening. Interpretation panels will be located at key locations such as at the Mudeford Quay/Mudeford spit ferry jetty, at Highcliffe Castle and at Chewton Bunny – linking in with interpretation boards at other key locations in Christchurch and Hengistbury Head.
- 7.1.14 On-going management and maintenance: 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:**

- 7.1.15 The Poole and Christchurch Bays Shoreline Management Plan SMP2 (covering the area from Durlston Head to Hurst Spit) identifies (in the short or medium term to 2055) a policy of 'hold the existing defence line'.
- 7.1.16 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 table 7.2.3 below for details of the sections likely to be affected in the foreseeable future.
- 7.1.17 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 5f - 'Coastal processes' and 8 - 'Future changes' of the Overview for more information.**

## Part 7.2: Commentary on Maps

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

### 7.2.1 Section Details – Map(s) 7a to 7c: Mudeford Quay to Chewton Bunny

Notes on table:

Column 2 – an asterisk (\*) against the route section number means see also table 7.2.2: Other options considered.

Column 5 – ‘Yes – see table 7.2.3’ 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
Maps	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)
7a	LCH-7-S001	Other existing walked route	Tarmac	No	Landward edge of trail (2m)	Not used	None
	LCH-7-S002	Other existing walked route	Tarmac	No	Landward edge of trail (2m)	Not used	None
	LCH-7-S003	Other existing walked route	Tarmac	No	Line of bollards	Clarity and cohesion	None
	LCH-7-S004*	Other existing walked route	Concrete	No	Wall	Clarity and cohesion	None
	LCH-7-S005*	Other existing walked route	Gravel	No	Wall	Clarity and cohesion	None
	LCH-7-S006*	Public highway	Tarmac	No	Landward edge of trail (2m)	Not used	None
	LCH-7-S007*	Public footpath	Tarmac	No	Wall	Clarity and cohesion	None
	LCH-7-S008*	Public footpath	Tarmac	No	Path	Clarity and cohesion	None
	LCH-7-S009	Public footpath	Tarmac	No	Edge of promenade	Clarity and cohesion	None
7b	LCH-7-S010*	Other existing walked route	Tarmac	Yes	Edge of promenade	Clarity and cohesion	None
	LCH-7-S011*	Other existing walked route	Sand	Yes	Base of cliff	Clarity and cohesion	None
	LCH-7-S012*	Other existing walked route	Gravel	Yes	Line of boulders	Clarity and cohesion	None
7c	LCH-7-S013*	Other existing walked route	Gravel	Yes	Line of boulders	Clarity and cohesion	None

## 7.2.2 Other options considered: Map(s) 7a to 7c: Mudeford Quay to Chewton Bunny

Map(s)	Section number(s)	Option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option as the route
7a	LCH-7-S004 to LCH-7-S005	We considered aligning the trail along the landward promenade that runs parallel to the lower path.	We opted for the proposed route because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ it is closer to and maintains better views of the sea.</li> <li>■ Christchurch Borough Council promotes the seaward path.</li> <li>■ Occasionally, on very high tides, the barrier shown on the map is closed and the proposed route may be flooded temporarily. It is possible at these times to follow the landward promenade, but it would not form part of the designated trail.</li> </ul>
7a	LCH-7-S006 to LCH-7-S008	We considered aligning the trail along the public footpath/promenade that runs parallel to the beach, seaward of the proposed route.	We opted for the proposed route because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The promenade would remain available for people to use as part of the spreading room, but would not form part of the designated trail.</li> <li>■ At certain times of year the car park and promenade can become very crowded.</li> <li>■ The proposed route offers elevated sea views.</li> </ul>
7b	Junction of LCH-7-S009/ S010 to the junction of LCH-7-S011/ S012	We considered aligning the trail landward from the beach up to Highcliffe Castle, following an existing walked route.	We opted for the proposed route because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ it is closer to and maintains better views of the sea.</li> <li>■ the cliff top path is closed from dusk until dawn.</li> <li>■ At the time of writing this report the zigzag path at the east end was undergoing maintenance and therefore inaccessible.</li> <li>■ we will still be able to provide clear signage to inform walkers of the cliff top route.</li> </ul>
7c	LCH-7-S013	We considered aligning the trail on other higher routes, following existing walked routes below High Cliff.	We opted for the proposed route because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ it is closer to and maintains views of the sea.</li> <li>■ it provides a stable, flat route.</li> <li>■ It links better with the proposed route to the west (route section LCH-7-S010 to LCH-7-S012).</li> <li>■ 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.</li> </ul>

## 7.2.3 Roll-back implementation – more complex situations: Map(s) 7a to 7c: Mudeford Quay to Chewton Bunny

Map(s)	Section number(s)	Feature or site potentially affected	How we will manage roll-back in relation to this feature or site
7c	LCH-7-S010-S013	Highcliffe to Milford Cliffs SSSI	If it is no longer possible to route the trail along the beach between Steamer Point Nature Reserve and the east end of Highcliffe Castle grounds, we will choose a route landward of it following discussions with owners. This is likely to incorporate the existing cliff top path through the Castle grounds if it is viable at the time.

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 7.3: Chapter 7 - Formal Proposals

- Below are our formal proposals to the Secretary of State for the length of coast shown on maps 7a to 7c.
- They should be read in conjunction with the relevant maps.
- The commentary above explains the practical effect of these proposals.

### Formal Proposals – Mudeford Quay to Chewton Bunny

#### Discretion to include an estuary

7.3.1 Natural England proposes to exercise its functions as if the sea included the estuarial waters of the rivers Stour and Avon as far as Tuckton Bridge which is the first public crossing point over the river Stour and Town and Waterloo Bridges which are the first public foot crossing points on the River Avon as indicated by the extent of the trail shown on maps 6b to 6f of Chapter 6, maps 7a to 7b of Chapter 7 and map F of the Overview.

#### Proposed route of the trail

7.3.2 In relation to route sections LCH-7-S001 to LCH-7-S009, the route is to be at the centre of the line shown on map 7a as the proposed route of the trail.

7.3.3 In relation to route sections LCH-7-S010 to LCH-7-S013, the route, as initially determined at the time the report was prepared, is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps 7b and 7c as the proposed route of the trail.

7.3.4 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.

#### Landward boundary of coastal margin

7.3.5 Adjacent to route section LCH-7-S003, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the line of bollards at the landward edge of the path shown as the trail on map 7a.

7.3.6 Adjacent to route sections LCH-7-S004, LCH-7-S005 and LCH-7-S007, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the existing wall at the landward edge of the path shown as the trail on map 7a.

7.3.7 Adjacent to route section LCH-7-S008, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the path shown as the trail on map 7a.

7.3.8 Adjacent to route section LCH-7-S009 and LCH-7-S010, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the promenade shown as the trail on map 7a and 7b.

7.3.9 Adjacent to route sections LCH-7-S012 and LCH-7-S013, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the line of boulders at the landward edge of the path shown as the trail on map 7b and 7c.

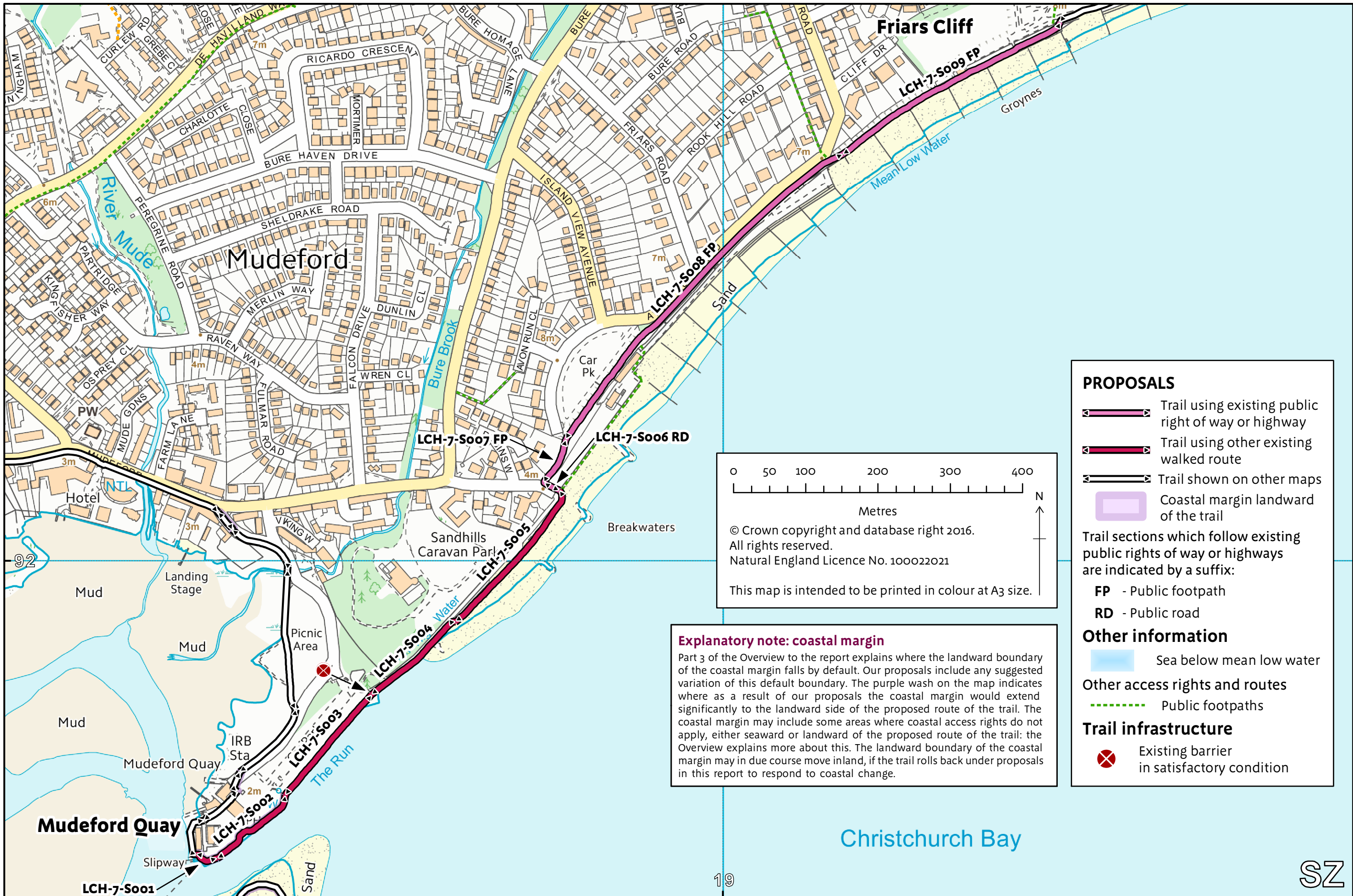
### **Local restrictions and exclusions**

7.3.10 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**

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





**PROPOSALS**

- Trail using existing public right of way or highway
- Trail using other existing walked route
- Trail shown on other maps
- Coastal margin landward of the trail

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

- FP** - Public footpath
- RD** - Public road

**Other information**

- Sea below mean low water

**Other access rights and routes**

- Public footpaths

**Trail infrastructure**

- Existing barrier in satisfactory condition

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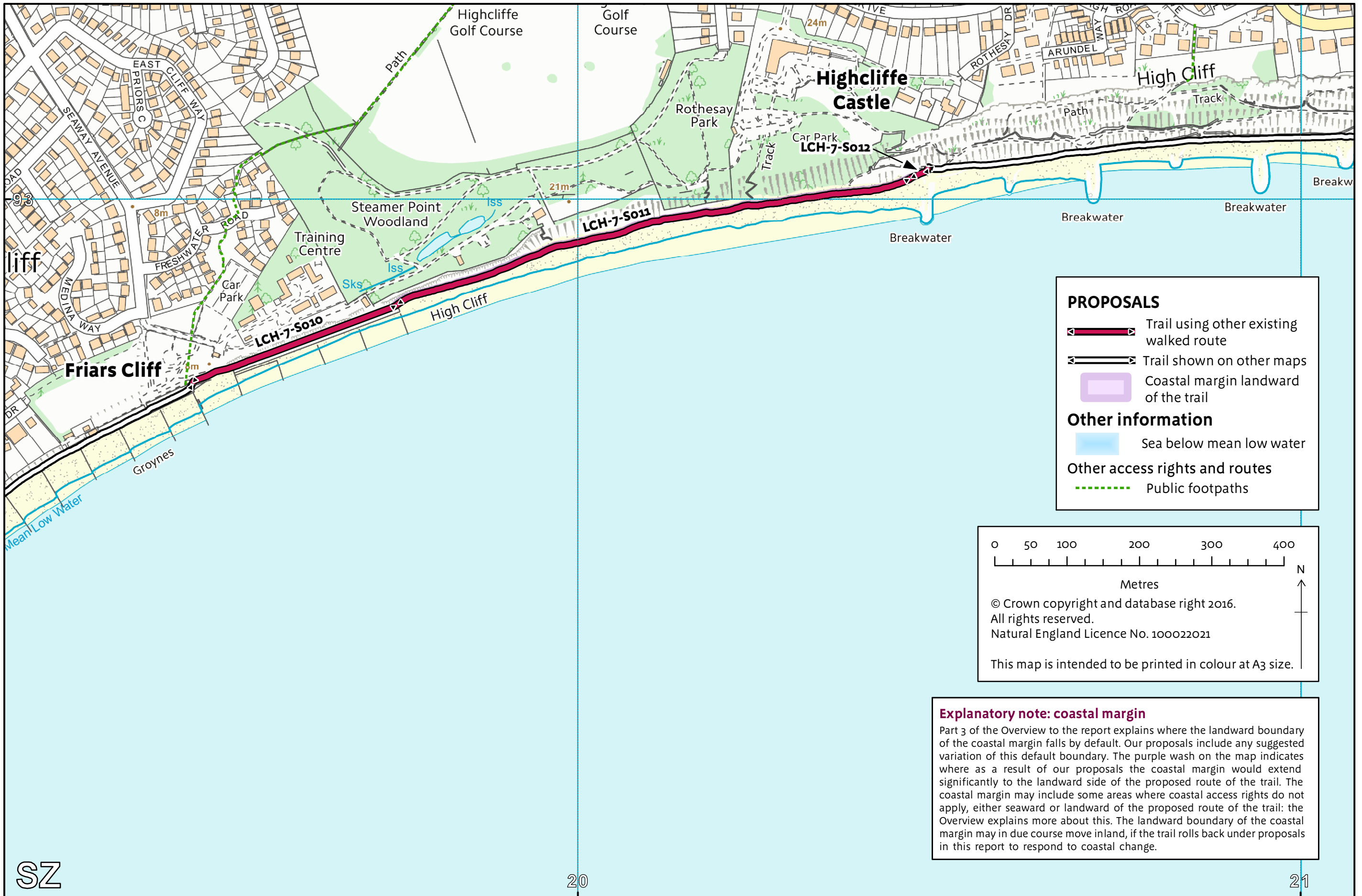
This map is intended to be printed in colour at A3 size.

**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.

Map 7a Mudeford Quay to Friars Cliff





**PROPOSALS**

- Trail using other existing walked route
- Trail shown on other maps
- Coastal margin landward of the trail

**Other information**

- Sea below mean low water

**Other access rights and routes**

- Public footpaths

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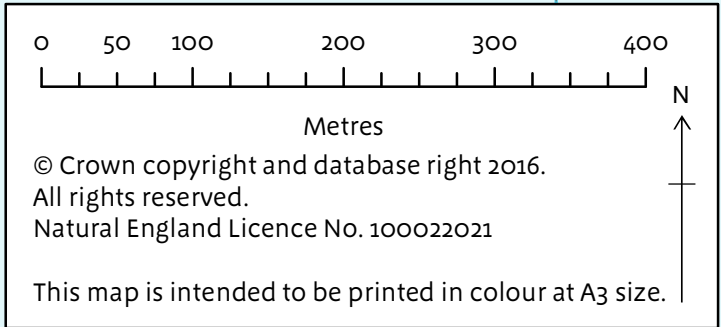
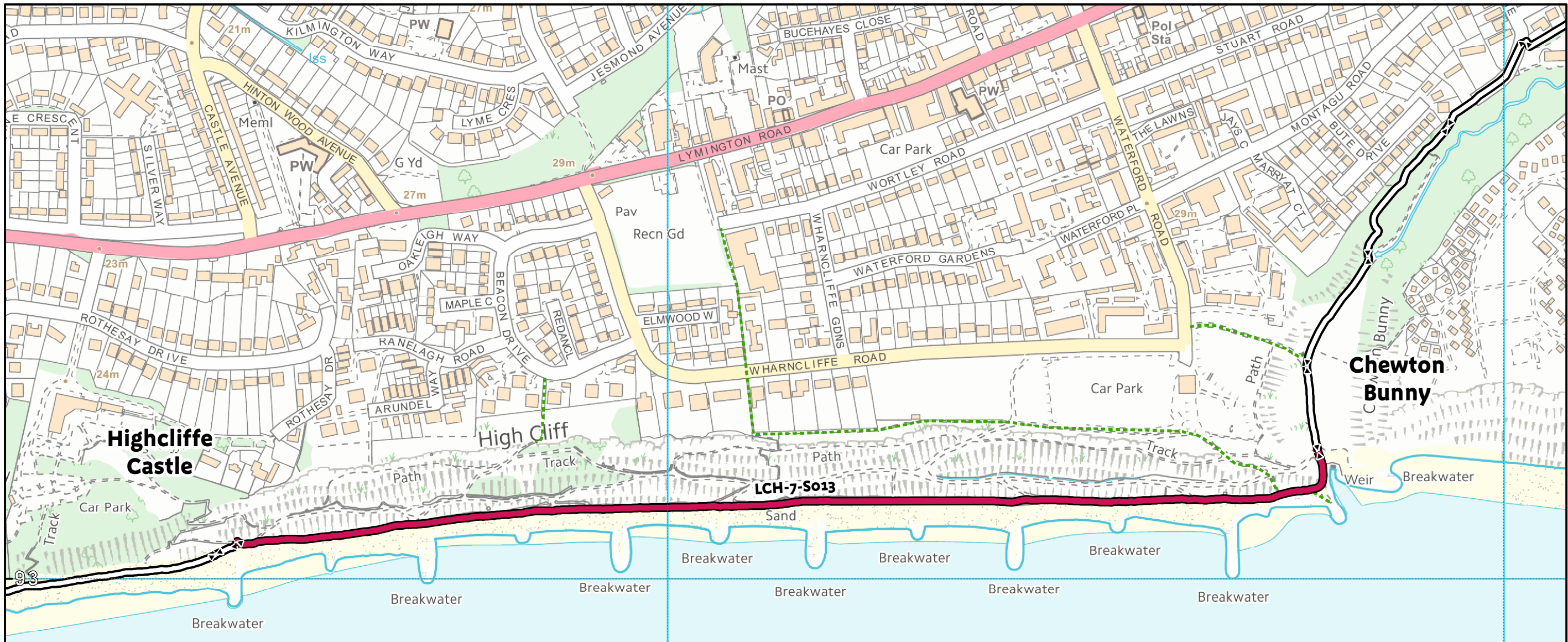
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Map 7b Friars Cliff to Highcliffe Castle





**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.

**PROPOSALS**

- Trail using other existing walked route
- Trail shown on other maps
- Coastal margin landward of the trail

**Other information**

- Sea below mean low water
- Public footpaths