

Chapter 3:

Bradwell Power Station to Stansgate

England Coast Path: Burnham-on-Crouch to Maldon - Natural England's Proposals

Part 3.1: Introduction

Start Point: : Bradwell Power Station (grid reference: TL 998 088)

End Point: Stansgate (grid reference: TL 934 058)

Relevant Maps: 3a to 3e

Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps:

The Trail:

- 3.1.1 Generally follows existing walked routes, including public rights of way, along most of this length.
- 3.1.2 Mainly follows the coastline quite closely and maintains good views of the sea
- 3.1.3 This part of the coast includes the following sites, designated for nature conservation or heritage preservation (See maps C and C2 of the Overview):
 - Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
 - Blackwater Estuary (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 4) Special Protection Area (SPA)
 - Blackwater Estuary (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 4) Ramsar site
 - Blackwater Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its wildlife and habitat interests
 - Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Colne Estuaries Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)

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.

- 3.1.4 With input from specialists we have considered each of the sites involved and the relevant designations and concluded that for this section of the coast our proposals will not have a detrimental effect.

In reaching this conclusion we have identified that it would be necessary to have an alternative winter route for BCM-3-So26 in order avoid increased disturbance to a nearby bird roosting site and appropriate signage to explain the importance of these habitats.

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

See part 6b of the Overview - 'Protection of sensitive features' for a description of our overall approach and a summary of our conclusions

Accessibility:

3.1.5 Generally, 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 entirely suitable for people with reduced mobility because:

- At Bradwell Waterside BCM-3-S004 it is necessary to descend/ascend a shallow sloping ramp to descend/ascend the grassy flood bank;
- In St Lawrence there are pedestrian squeezes on the intersection of BCM-3-S034 and BCM-3-S035 and on BCM-3-S041 where the existing walked line meets vehicle traffic.

3.1.6 West of Orplands managed realignment site, at the intersection of BCM-3-S017 and BCM-3-S018, the existing stile will be improved so as to make it easier to use. We envisage this happening before the new access rights come into force as part of the physical establishment work described in part 7 of the Overview.

3.1.7 At St Lawrence Caravan Park BCM-3-A002 it is necessary to descend/ascend a short flight of steps when using the proposed alternative winter route. These steps will be improved so as to make them easier to use. We envisage this happening before the new access rights come into force as part of the physical establishment work described in part 7 of the Overview.

See part 6a 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 the Overview.

3.1.8 Estuary: This report proposes that the trail should contain sections aligned on the estuary of the Rivers Crouch and Blackwater, extending upstream from the open coast. See part 5 of the Overview. The trail covered by this chapter includes part of this estuary route on the River Blackwater.

3.1.9 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 3.2.1 below.

3.1.10 At sections BCM-3-S001 to BCM-3-S003, BCM-3-S013, BCM-3-S014, BCM-3-S016 to BCM-3-S024, BCM-3-S037 to BCM-3-S039, BCM-3-S042 to BCM-3-S044 and BCM-3-S047 to BCM-3-S070 we have used this discretion to limit the landward extent of the coastal margin to the landward top edge of the seawall. This has had the effect of reducing the amount of coastal margin that would have otherwise been available by default. This option provides the most clarity because:

- The break in slope provides an easily identifiable boundary for access users.
- There is no clear boundary feature at the bottom of the seawall that could mark the boundary of the coastal margin.

3.1.11 In some places, we have used our discretion to propose the inclusion of additional, more extensive landward areas within the coastal margin, to secure or enhance public enjoyment of this part of the coast. The owner of this land is content for us to propose this.

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'.

- 3.1.12 Restrictions and/or exclusions: We have proposed to exclude access by direction under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) in certain places along this section of coast. For details of these directions, see 3.3.7 in the Formal Proposals Section of this chapter and Part 10 of the Overview.
- 3.1.13 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.

See part 10 of the Overview - 'Restrictions and exclusions' - for details.

- 3.1.14 An alternative route between the east and west of St Lawrence caravan park would follow route sections BCM-3-A001 and BCM-3-A002 as shown on map 3d and described below and would be advertised by the owner using permanent interpretation panels. This alternate route would operate 1st October to 31st March and aims to prevent disturbance to feeding and roosting birds. It would not have the effect of creating any additional spreading room on either the seaward or the landward side.
- 3.1.15 Other factors affecting access: At route sections BCM-3-S010 to BCM-3-S012 [Bradwell Marina], BCM-3-S023 [Waterside Holiday Park, St Lawrence], BCM-3-S034 [The Stone], BCM-3-S041 [The Stone Sailing Club] and BCM-3-S052 [Sea View Promenade, St Lawrence] public access may be interrupted from time to time for short periods to allow vehicles to pass and/or boats to be launched/recovered. This arrangement would continue without any local restriction on the new access rights to give effect to it formally.

Establishment and ongoing management of the trail

- 3.1.16 Some physical establishment of the trail would be necessary, in accordance with the general approach described in part 7 the Overview.
- Improvements to the surface, signage, interpretation and steps of the existing winter diversion BCM-3-A001 and BCM-3-A002
 - New step stile at intersection of BCM-3-S017 and BCM-3-S018
- 3.1.17 Ongoing management and maintenance would be necessary in accordance with the general approach described in part 8 of the Overview.

See parts 7 - 'Physical establishment of the trail' and 8 - 'Maintenance of the trail' of the Overview for more information.

Future Change:

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

See parts 6f - 'Coastal processes' and 9 - 'Future changes' of the Overview for more information.

Part 3.2: Commentary on Maps

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

3.2.1 Section Details – Maps 3a to 3c: Bradwell Power Station to Stansgate

Notes on table:

Column 2 – an asterisk (*) against the route section number means see also table 3.2.3: Other options considered.

Column 7 – all sections are subject to a s25A CROW direction (year round) in the coastal margin for the purpose of excluding access to saltmarsh and mudflat on grounds of unsuitability for public access.

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)
3a	BCM-3-S001 to BCM-3-S003	Public footpath	Grass	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-3-S004	Public footpath	Grass	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-3-S005*	Public footway (pavement)	Other	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-3-S006*	Public highway	Other	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	BCM-3-S007*	Public footpath	Other	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-3-S008	Public footpath	Block paving	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	BCM-3-S009	Public footpath	Gravel	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	BCM-3-S010	Public footpath	Tarmac	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	BCM-3-S011	Public footpath	Concrete	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	BCM-3-S012	Public footpath	Bare soil: Compacted	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
3b	BCM-3-S013 & BCM-3-S014	Public footpath	Grass	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-3-S015	Public footpath	Grass	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	BCM-3-S016	Public footpath	Grass	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
3c	BCM-3-S017 to BCM-3-S020	Public footpath	Grass	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin

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)
3d	BCM-3-So21 & BCM-3-So22	Public footpath	Grass	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-3-So23	Public footpath	Tarmac	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-3-So24	Public footpath	Grass	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-3-So25*	Other existing walked route	Bare soil: Compacted	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-3-So26	Public footpath	Gravel	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-3-So27*	Public footpath	Bare soil: Compacted	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-3-So28* & BCM-3-So29*	Other existing walked route	Grass	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	BCM-3-So30*	Public footway (pavement)	Tarmac	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-3-So31*	Other existing walked route	Tarmac	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	BCM-3-So32*	Public footway (pavement)	Tarmac	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-3-So33*	Public footway (pavement)	Block paving	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-3-So34*	Public highway	Concrete	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	BCM-3-So35*	Other existing walked route	Gravel	No	Various	Clarity and cohesion	Margin

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)
3e	BCM-3-So36*	Other existing walked route	Gravel	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-3-So37* to BCM-3-So39*	Other existing walked route	Gravel	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-3-So40* & BCM-3-So41*	Other existing walked route	Gravel	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-3-So42* & BCM-3-So43*	Other existing walked route	Gravel	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-3-So44	Public footpath	Gravel	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-3-So45 & BCM-3-So46	Public footpath	Gravel	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-3-So47 to BCM-3-So56	Public footpath	Gravel	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-3-So57	Public footpath	Bare soil: Compacted	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-3-So58 to BCM-3-So66	Public footpath	Gravel	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-3-So67 to BCM-3-So70	Public footpath	Bare soil: Compacted	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin

3.2.2 Alternative routes and optional alternative route details – Maps 3a to 3e: Bradwell Power Station to Stansgaten

By default, the alternative route will cover the land two metres either side of the approved line for this route. However by virtue of s55D(2) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, where the alternative route follows an existing path corridor, the trail may adopt a variable width as dictated by existing physical features. Columns 6a and 6b of this table describe the boundaries of the alternative route strips.

1	2	3	4	5	6a	6b	6c	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)	Seaward boundary of alternative route strip	Landward boundary of alternative route strip (See maps)	Reason for boundary discretion	Proposed exclusions or restrictions (see Part 9 of Overview)
3d	BCM-3-A001	Other existing walked route	Grass	No	Default: Seaward edge of trail	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-3-A002	Other existing walked route	Steps: Concrete	No	Default: Seaward edge of trail	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	Margin

3.2.3 Other options considered: Maps 3a to 3e: Bradwell Power Station to Stansgate

Map(s)	Section number(s)	Option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option as the route
3a	BCM-3-S005 to BCM-3-S007	We considered following the line of the public footpaths and private sea wall seaward of the proposed route.	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ It does not cross land used throughout the year for residential school visits; ■ it uses existing public footpaths and highways; ■ loss of sight of the sea is brief; ■ it maintains a coastal feel; ■ Under our proposals, the public footpath would remain available for people to use as part of the spreading room, but would not form part of the designated trail.
3d	BCM-3-S025	We considered following the line of the public footpath seaward of the proposed route.	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ it maintains views of the sea; ■ it is more direct; ■ it is currently the more popular walked line; ■ the walking surface is better so it is more accessible to a wider range of people; ■ 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; and ■ this proposal is made with the support of the landowner.
3d & 3e	BCM-3-SS027 to BCM-3-S044	<p>We considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> following the line of the public footpath along the foreshore seaward of the proposed route; following a number of inland routes east of The Stone (both south and north of the proposed route) 	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ it is available at all states of the tide; ■ it is safer; ■ the walking surface is more pleasant to walk along and accessible to a wider range of people; ■ it is an existing walked line; ■ loss of sight of the sea is brief; ■ it maintains a coastal feel; ■ 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; and ■ it does not cross excepted land.

Part 3.3: Chapter 3 - Formal Proposals

- Below are our formal proposals to the Secretary of State for the length of coast shown on maps 3a to 3e.
- They should be read in conjunction with the relevant maps.
- The commentary above explains the practical effect of these proposals.

Formal Proposals – Bradwell Power Station to Stansgate

Discretion to include an estuary

- 3.3.1 Natural England proposes to exercise its functions as if the sea included the estuarial waters of the River Blackwater as far as Promenade Park in Maldon as indicated by the extent of the trail shown on map 6e.

Proposed route of the trail

- 3.3.2 The route is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps 3a to 3e as the proposed route of the trail.

Landward boundary of coastal margin

- 3.3.3 Adjacent to route sections BCM-3-S004, BCM-3-S025 to BCM-3-S027, BCM-3-S036, BCM-3-S040, BCM-3-S041, BCM-3-S045 and BCM-3-S046 the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the existing boundary fence which, at the time of writing this report, is landward of the public footpath and walked lines shown as the trail on map 3a, 3d and 3e.
- 3.3.4 Adjacent to route sections BCM-3-S005, BCM-3-S007, BCM-3-S030, BCM-3-S032 and BCM-3-S033 the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with landward edge of the pavement shown as the trail on maps 3a and 3d.
- 3.3.5 Adjacent to route section BCM-3-S035 the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with both the landward edge of the top of the sea wall and the existing boundary fence which, at the time of writing this report, is landward of the walked line shown as the trail on map 3d.
- 3.3.6 Adjacent to route sections BCM-3-S001 to BCM-3-S003, BCM-3-S013, BCM-3-S014, BCM-3-S016 to BCM-3-S024, BCM-3-S037 to BCM-3-S039, BCM-3-S042 to BCM-3-S044, and BCM-3-S047 to BCM-3-S070 the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the top of the sea wall shown as the trail on maps 5a to 5c.

Local restrictions and exclusions

- 3.3.7 Natural England proposes to exclude access relevant to this length of coast, as follows:
- Access is to be excluded all year-round to all areas of intertidal mudflats and salt marsh on this length of coast, adjacent to route sections BCM-3-S001 to BCM-3-S070. This exclusion is proposed under s25A of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) as the land is unsuitable for public access. This exclusion will not affect the route itself and does not apply to any land that could be considered to be excepted. See maps O to Q in the Overview for details.
 - Access to the ECP will be excluded all year-round along the seaward margin, adjacent to route sections BCM-3-S032 to BCM-3-S034 under s24 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) on the grounds of land management in order to prevent disruption to commercial activities at The Stone Watersports Club. This exclusion will not affect the route itself and does not apply to any land that could be considered to be excepted. See map E in the Overview for details.

- Access to the ECP will be excluded all year-round along the seaward margin, adjacent to route sections BCM-3-So35 to BCM-3-So43 under s24 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) on the grounds of land management in order to prevent disruption to commercial activities at The Stone Sailing Club and boatyard. This exclusion will not affect the route itself and does not apply to any land that could be considered to be excepted. See map F in the Overview for details.

Please refer to Part 10 of the Overview for further details.

Alternative routes

- 3.3.8 An alternative route is to operate as a diversion from the ordinary route on route section BCM-3-So26 between October and March annually. The alternative route is to be at the centre of the line shown as BCM-3-Aoo1 and BCM-3-Aoo2 on map 3d.

Landward/seaward boundary of alternative route strip

- 3.3.9 Adjacent to route section BCM-3-Aoo1 and BCM-3-Aoo2 the landward boundary of the alternative route strip is to correspond to the existing fence line landward of the line shown as the trail on map 3d.









