

Chapter 5:

Lynton to Woody Bay

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

Part 5.1: Introduction

Start Point:	North Walk, Lynton (grid reference: SS 7280 4955)
End Point:	Woody Bay (grid reference: SS 6770 4879)
Relevant Maps:	5a to 5c

Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps:

The Trail:

- 5.1.1 Follows the existing South West Coast Path as currently walked and managed between North Walk, Lynton and Lee Abbey (route sections MCM-5-S001 to MCM-5-S007), along the road adjacent to Lee Abbey (route section MCM-5-S009), and between Lee Bay and Woody Bay (route sections MCM-5-S011 to MCM-5-S020). The existing South West Coast Path mainly follows public rights of way along this length. See maps 5a to 5c and associated table 5.2.1 below for more details.
- 5.1.2 Differs from the existing South West Coast Path along a 190m length to the east of Lee Abbey (route section MCM-5-S008) and along a 250m length by Lee Bay (route section MCM-5-S010). Both these new sections take the route closer to the sea and away from the road. See map 5b and associated table 5.2.2 below for details.
- 5.1.3 The South West Coast Path generally follows the coast quite closely over this length and maintains good views of the sea. For the most part we propose adopting the walked line of the South West Coast Path as the line of the England Coast Path. However, there are places where we have proposed improvements to the existing route line, 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.
- 5.1.4 This part of the coast includes the following sites, designated for nature conservation or heritage preservation (See map C of the Overview):

- Exmoor and Quantock Oakwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC);
- West Exmoor Coast and Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

5.1.5 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.

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:

5.1.6 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, 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, for example along route sections MCM-5-S007 and MCM-5-S011 to MCM-5-S015)

5.1.7 Along the new section of trail at Lee Abbey (route section MCM-5-S008) the route is more level than the current South West Coast Path alignment and more closely follows the contour – the new path furniture will be hunting gates rather than stiles to allow maximum accessibility.

5.1.8 At Lee Bay (route section MCM-5-S010) the current South West Coast Path alignment is more accessible to all because there are no gates and it is a gentle climb of the hill on a tarmacked route. The proposed new route will have two gates, steps and a staircase to cope with the steeper climb. A zig zag path has been considered but this was felt to be more visually intrusive in this location. Since the road along which the South West Coast Path currently runs will not be closed by these proposals, people with reduced mobility will still have onward access via this route and can rejoin the trail further on. The new infrastructure being put in place will form part of the physical establishment work described in part 6 of the Overview.

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

Where we have proposed exercising our discretion:

5.1.9 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.

5.1.10 At the Valley of the Rocks (route sections MCM-5-S006 and MCM-5-S007, we have used our discretion to propose the inclusion of an existing 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 map 5a and the associated table 5.2.1 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'.

- 5.1.11 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.
- 5.1.12 Access to the land at Lee Abbey in route section MCM-5-S009 is to be excluded by direction all year round under s24 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) for land management purposes, to enable existing commercial activities to continue. The exclusion will have no legal effect on land where coastal access rights do not apply. See map D in the Overview for further details.
- 5.1.13 Access to the land at Lee Abbey in route section MCM-5-S010 is proposed to be excluded for up to 60 days per calendar year, under s24 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000). This will be for land management purposes, to enable existing temporary campsite activities to continue. The exclusion will have no legal effect on land where coastal access rights do not apply. See map E in the Overview for further details.

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

- 5.1.14 Alternative routes: An alternative route would operate at times when the exclusion noted in paragraph 5.1.13 is in force and would be advertised by the owner with temporary signs.
- 5.1.15 The alternative route between either end of route section MCM-5-S010 would follow route section MCM-5-A001 along the road. See map 5b and associated table 5.2.3 below for details. It would not have the effect of creating any additional spreading room on either the seaward or the landward side.

Establishment and ongoing management of the trail

- 5.1.16 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.
- 5.1.17 For the new section to the east of Lee Abbey (route section MCM-5-S008) and to the west of Lee Abbey at Lee Bay (route section MCM-5-S010) some physical establishment of the trail would be necessary, in accordance with the general approach described in part 6 of the Overview. This would include two new gates at either end of route section MCM-5-S008 and a new gate, new steps and a staircase at the western end of route section MCM-5-S010.
- 5.1.18 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:

- 5.1.19 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 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 below for details of the sections that may be affected in the foreseeable future.
- 5.1.20 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 5.2: Commentary on the maps

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

Table 5.2.1 includes sections of the trail that follow the existing South West Coast Path as currently walked and managed. Table 5.2.2 includes sections of the trail that differ from the existing South West Coast Path.

5.2.1 Details for sections that follow the existing South West Coast Path: Maps 5a to 5c, North Walk, Lynton to West Woodybay Wood

Notes on table:

Column 2 – an asterisk (*) against the route section number means see also table 5.2.4: 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 5.2.5'" 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)
5a	MCM-5-S001 to MCM-5-S003	Yes - normal	Path	Clarity and cohesion	None
	MCM-5-S004	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	MCM-5-S005	Yes - normal	Road	Clarity and cohesion	None
	MCM-5-S006* and MCM-5-S007*	Yes - normal	Road	Additional landward area	None
5b	See table 5.2.2 for sections that differ from the existing South West Coast Path				
	MCM-5-S009*	No	Road	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	See table 5.2.2 for sections that differ from the existing South West Coast Path				
	MCM-5-S011 and MCM-5-S012	Yes - normal	Path	Clarity and cohesion	None
	MCM-5-S013 and MCM-5-S014	Yes - normal	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	None
	MCM-5-S015	Yes - normal	Path	Clarity and cohesion	None
5c	MCM-5-S016	Yes - normal	Road	Clarity and cohesion	None
	MCM-5-S017	Yes – see table 5.2.5	Road	Clarity and cohesion	None
	MCM-5-S018	Yes – see table 5.2.5	Path	Clarity and cohesion	None
	MCM-5-S019	Yes – see table 5.2.5	Road	Clarity and cohesion	None
	MCM-5-S020	Yes - normal	Path	Clarity and cohesion	None

5.2.2 Details for sections that differ from the existing South West Coast Path – Map 5b, Lee Abbey to Crock Pits Wood

Notes on table:

Column 2 – an asterisk (*) against the route section number means see also table 5.2.4: 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 5.2.5’ 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)
5b	MCM-5-S008*	Not an existing walked route	Grass	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	MCM-5-S010*	Not an existing walked route	Grass	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Route and margin

5.2.3 Alternative routes and optional route details: Map 5b, Lee Abbey to Crock Pits Wood

Notes on table:

By default, the alternative route/optional 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/optional 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)
5b	MCM-5-A001	Public highway	Tarmac	No	Road	Road	Clarity and cohesion	None

5.2.4 Other options considered: Maps 5a and 5b, Lynton to Crock Pits Wood

Map(s)	Section number(s)	Option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option as the route
5a	MCM-5-S006 and MCM-5-007	We considered various options in relation to landward extent of margin over existing CROW access land in consultation with the relevant owners and occupiers.	<p>We opted for the proposed extent of landward margin because:</p> <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.
5b	MCM-5-S008 and MCM-5-S009	We considered aligning the trail around the seaward edge of Lee Abbey by Duty Point.	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ a large area of the Lee Abbey Estate could be classed by Schedule 1 to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 as ‘land used as a park or garden’ and therefore excepted from any new coastal access rights. The owners do not wish to voluntarily dedicate a suitable permanent route through the excepted area in question due to the implications this would have on the business concerned. It has therefore not been possible to find a suitable route through; ■ adjacent to the area of excepted land there is an area of land which is required by the owners to enable existing commercial activities to continue without undue impact on the business concerned. It has therefore not been possible to find a suitable route through; ■ 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.
5b	MCM-5-S010	We considered aligning the trail along a zig zag path at the western end of MCM-5-S010 to avoid walkers having a steep climb out of the field.	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ a zig zag route was felt to be more visually intrusive in this location; ■ since the road along which the South West Coast Path currently runs will not be closed by these proposals, people with reduced mobility will still have onward access via this route and can rejoin the trail further on.

5.2.5 Roll-back implementation – more complex situations: map 5c Crock Pits Wood to West Woodybay Wood

Map(s)	Section numbers(s)	Feature or site potentially affected	How we will manage roll-back in relation to this feature or site
	MCM-5-S017 to MCM-5-S019	Woody Bay	If it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of any excepted land (e.g. buildings, curtilage, gardens etc), we will choose a route landward of it, following discussions with owners and occupiers.

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 5.3: Chapter 5 - Formal Proposals

- Below are our formal proposals to the Secretary of State for the length of coast shown on maps 5a to 5c.
- They should be read in conjunction with the relevant maps.
- The commentary above explains the practical effect of these proposals.

Formal Proposals – Lynton to Woody Bay

Proposed route of the trail

- 5.3.1 In relation to route sections MCM-5-S001 to MCM-5-S008, and MCM-5-S010 to MCM-5-S020 the route, as initially determined at the time the report was prepared, is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps 5a to 5c as the proposed route of the trail.
- 5.3.2 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.
- 5.3.3 In relation to route section MCM-5-S009, the route is to be at the centre of the line shown on map 5b as the proposed route of the trail.

Landward boundary of coastal margin

- 5.3.4 Adjacent to route sections MCM-5-S001 to MCM-5-S003, MCM-5-S011, MCM-5-S012, MCM-5-S015, MCM-5-S018 and MCM-5-S020, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the path shown as the trail on maps 5a to 5c.
- 5.3.5 Adjacent to route sections MCM-5-S005, MCM-5-S009, MCM-5-S016, MCM-5-S017 and MCM-5-S019, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the road shown as the trail on maps 5a to 5c.
- 5.3.6 Adjacent to route sections MCM-5-S006 and MCM-5-S007, 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 5a.
- 5.3.7 Adjacent to route section MCM-5-S013 and MCM-5-S014, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the fence line shown as the trail on map 5b.

Local restrictions and exclusions

- 5.3.8 Natural England proposes to restrict or exclude access relevant to this length of coast as follows:
- Access to the land at Lee Abbey in route section MCM-5-S009 is to be excluded by direction all year round under s24 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) for land management purposes, to enable existing commercial activities to continue. The exclusion will have no legal effect on land where coastal access rights do not apply. See map D in the Overview for further details.
 - Access to the land at Lee Abbey in route section MCM-5-S010 is proposed to be excluded for up to 60 days per calendar year, under s24 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000). This will be for land management purposes, to enable existing temporary campsite activities to continue. The exclusion will have no legal effect on land where coastal access rights do not apply. See map E in the Overview for further details.

Refer to part 9 of the Overview for further detail

Alternative routes

- 5.3.9 An alternative route is to operate at times when access to route section MCM-5-S010 is excluded under the terms of the direction described in paragraph 5.1.8 above. The alternative route is to be at the centre of the line shown as route section MCM-5-A001 on map 5b.
- 5.3.10 Adjacent to route section MCM-5-A001, the landward boundary of the alternative route strip is to correspond to the landward edge of the road, shown as the trail on map 5b.





