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# England Coast Path Stretch: Southend-on-Sea to Wallasea Island



**Report SWI 3: Little Wakering to Sutton Ford Bridge** 

## Part 3.1: Introduction

Start Point:	Little Wakering (grid reference: TQ 9316 8897)
End Point:	Sutton Ford Bridge, Rochford (grid reference: TQ 8832 8963)
Relevant Maps:	SWI 3a to SWI 3f

3.1.1 This is one of a series of linked but legally separate reports published by Natural England under section 51 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, which make proposals to the Secretary of State for improved public access along and to this stretch of coast between Southend-on-Sea and Wallasea Island.

3.1.2 This report covers length SWI 3 of the stretch, which is the coast between Little Wakering and Sutton Ford Bridge. It makes free-standing statutory proposals for this part of the stretch, and seeks approval for them by the Secretary of State in their own right under section 52 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

3.1.3 The report explains how we propose to implement the England Coast Path ("the trail") on this part of the stretch, and details the likely consequences in terms of the wider 'Coastal Margin' that will be created if our proposals are approved by the Secretary of State. Our report also sets out:

- any proposals we think are necessary for restricting or excluding coastal access rights to address particular issues, in line with the powers in the legislation; and
- any proposed powers for the trail to be capable of being relocated on particular sections ("rollback"), if this proves necessary in the future because of coastal change.

3.1.4 There is also a single Overview document for the whole of this stretch of coast, explaining common principles and background. This and the other individual reports relating to the stretch should be read in conjunction with the Overview. The Overview explains, among other things, how we have considered any potential environmental impacts of improving public access to this part of the coast, and this report, and other separately published assessments we refer to, then provides more detail on these aspects where appropriate.

## Part 3.2: Proposals Narrative

#### The trail:

3.2.1 Follows existing walked routes, including public rights of way, along most of this length, except as described in paragraph 3.2.3 below.

3.2.2 Follows the coastline quite closely and maintains good views of the Roach Estuary.

3.2.3 Includes a new path between Roach Farm (on map SWI 3c) and Fleet Hall (on map SWI 3f), mainly on the seabank crest along the south side of the River Roach (route sections SWI-3-S023 to SWI-3-S031). Together, these provide a significant enhancement to the local access network, by adding a pleasant and more direct east-west link with fine views down the river. It creates a route along the southern shore that matches the current access along the north bank of the river coupled with the benefit of avoiding the busy Shopland Road with its fast traffic and narrow verges. See maps SWI 3c to 3f and associated tables below for details.

#### Protection of the environment:

3.2.4 In this part of the report, we explain how we have taken account of environmental protection objectives in developing our proposals for improved coastal access.

3.2.5 The following designated sites affect this length of coast (See Overview Maps C1, C2 and D):

- Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Foulness Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Foulness Ramsar site
- Foulness Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designated for its wildlife interest
- Crouch and Roach Estuaries SPA
- Crouch and Roach Estuaries Ramsar site
- Crouch and Roach Estuaries SSSI designated for its wildlife interest
- Outer Thames Estuary SPA
- Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Colne Estuaries Marine Conservation Zone
- Heavy Anti-aircraft gunsite, 380m south east of Butler's Gate Scheduled Monument

The following table brings together design features included in our access proposals to help to protect the environment along this length of the coast.

#### 3.2.6 Measures to protect the environment

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Design features of the access proposals	Reason included
SWI 3c to SWI 3f	SWI-3-S023 to SWI-3- S029	<ul> <li>The following design features are described elsewhere in this report:</li> <li>The landward boundary of the coastal margin has been extended adjacent to route sections SWI-3-S023, SWI-3-S025 and SWI-3-S028, allowing people to walk on the folding landward of the bank when birds are present on the river in those places (see Table 3.3.1)</li> <li>We will also install advisory signs at Mucking Hall, Butler's Farm and Fleet Hall explaining the sensitivity of some waterbirds to disturbance and asking people to use the lower folding when high tides push birds close to the seabank and observe the requirement to keep dogs under close control to reduce bird disturbance.</li> </ul>	To reduce bird disturbance No specific measures are needed to protect the Scheduled Monument, as it lies landward of the trail (unaffected)

3.2.7 Natural England is satisfied that the proposals for coastal access in this report are made in accordance with relevant environmental protection legislation. In respect of cultural heritage, we have taken advice from Historic England and others before confirming this conclusion. For more information about how we came to this conclusion in respect of the natural environment; see the following assessments of the access proposals that we have published separately:

- A Habitats Regulations Assessment relating to any potential impact on the conservation objectives of European sites.
- Our Nature Conservation Assessment, in which we document our conclusions in relation to other potential impacts on nature conservation.

Part 6b of the Overview includes some contextual information about protecting the environment along this length of coast.

#### Accessibility:

- 3.2.8 There are few artificial barriers to accessibility on the proposed route. However, the natural coastal terrain is often challenging for people with reduced mobility and this is the case on sections of our proposed route because:
- The trail would follow uneven ground along some existing public rights of way (SWI-3-S005 and SWI-3-S006, map SWI 3a); we are planning to improve the surface
- There are places where it would be necessary to circumvent floodgates (steps) or gain access to the crest of the seabank via sets of steps (SWI-3-S011 and SWI-3-S013, map SWI 3a)

#### See part 6a of the Overview - 'Recreational issues' - for more information.

#### Where we have proposed exercising statutory discretions:

3.2.9 **Estuary:** This report proposes that the trail should contain sections aligned on the estuary of the River Roach, extending upstream from the open coast. Natural England proposes to exercise its functions as if the sea included the estuarial waters of that river between Little Wakering and Sutton Ford Bridge (first foot crossing), as indicated by the extent of the trail shown on maps SWI 3a to 3f.

# See part 5 of the Overview for a detailed analysis of the options considered for this estuary and our resulting proposals.

3.2.10 **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 3.3.1 below.

3.2.11 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.

3.2.12 The Proposals Tables show where we are proposing to alter the default landward boundary of the coastal margin. These proposals are set out in columns 5b and 5c of Table 3.3.1. Where these columns are left blank, we are making no such proposals, so the default landward boundary applies. See the note relating to columns 5b & 5c [above Table 3.3.1] explaining what this means in practice.

# See also part 3 of the Overview - 'Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps', for a more detailed 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.

3.2.13 **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.

#### Exclusion of access to the saltmarsh and mudflats between Little Wakering and Sutton Ford Bridge.

3.2.14 Access to the saltmarsh and mudflat in the coastal margin seaward of route sections SWI-3-S001 to SWI-3-S032 is to be excluded all year round by direction under s25A of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) as it is unsuitable for public access. The exclusion does not affect the route itself and will have no legal effect on land where coastal access rights do not apply. See Directions Maps SWI 3A and 3B.

3.2.15 The saltmarsh at this location is uneven and wet underfoot and contains many creeks and channels, some of which would not be readily apparent to walkers and which can pose a significant risk, or may cause walkers unfamiliar with the area to become cut off from the mainland.

3.2.16 These directions will not prevent or affect:

- any existing local use of the land by right: such use is not covered by coastal access rights;
- any other use people already make of the land locally by formal agreement with the landowner, or by informal permission or traditional toleration; or
- use of any registered rights of common or any rights at common law or by Royal Charter etc.

Any such use is not prohibited or limited by these arrangements.

3.2.17 The directions we give are intended to avoid any new public rights being created over the area in question in view of the hidden dangers of mudflats and saltmarsh (section 25A).

#### See part 8 of the Overview - 'Restrictions and exclusions' - for a summary for the entire stretch.

3.2.18 **Coastal erosion:** Natural England is able to propose that the route of the trail would be able to change in the future, without further approval from the Secretary of State, in response to coastal change. This would happen in accordance with the criteria and procedures for 'roll-back' set out in part 7 of the Overview.

Natural England may only propose the use of this roll-back power:

- as a result of coastal erosion or other geomorphological processes or encroachment by the sea, or
- in order to link with other parts of the route that need to roll back in direct response to such changes.

3.2.19 Column 4 of Table 3.3.1 indicates where roll-back has been proposed in relation to a route section. Where this is the case, the route, as initially determined at the time the report was prepared, is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps SWI 3c to SWI 3d as the proposed route of the trail.

3.2.20 If at any time in the future any part of a route section upon which roll-back has been specified needs, in Natural England's view, to change 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 7 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.

On sections for which roll-back is <u>not</u> proposed in Table 3.3.1, the route is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps SWI 3a to SWI 3f as the proposed route of the trail.

#### Other future change:

3.2.21 At this point we do not foresee any other need for future changes to the access provisions that we have proposed within this report.

#### See part 7 - 'Future changes' of the Overview for more information.

### Establishment of the trail:

3.2.22 Below we summarise how our proposed route for the trail would be physically established to make it ready for public use before any new rights come into force. Establishment works will only start on this length of coast once these proposals have been approved by the Secretary of State. The works may therefore either precede or follow the start of establishment works on other lengths of coast within the stretch, and detailed in their separate reports.

3.2.23 Our estimate of the capital costs for physical establishment of the trail on the proposed route is £29,600 and is informed by:

- information already held by the access authority, Essex County Council, in relation to the management of the existing public rights of way and other walked routes;
- the conclusions of our deliberations in relation to potential impacts on the environment; and
- information gathered while visiting affected land and talking to the people who own and manage it about the options for the route.

3.2.24 There are three main elements to the overall cost:

- New Signs: A number of new signs (way-marking discs and fingerposts) would be needed on the trail, in particular on new route sections where the proposed route joins or leaves the existing public right of way network. New advisory signs are required to reduce disturbance to waterbirds (see Table 3.2.6 above) and to remind the public of year round exclusion of the saltmarsh and mudflats (on safety grounds).
- Surface repairs and vegetation clearance will be needed in an area liable to scrub encroachment, waterlogging and slumping. This will make the route more open and accessible (SWI-3-S005 and SWI-3-S006, map SWI 3a).
- The new field edge path at Fleet Hall (SWI-3-S031, map SWI 3f) requiring the establishment of a suitable path width, scrub clearance and surfacing work.

Table 1 shows our estimate of the capital cost for each of the main elements of physical establishment described above.

#### Table 1: Estimate of capital costs

Item	Cost
Signs & interpretation	£5,900
Surfacing repairs & vegetation clearance	£7,300
Establishing new sections of path	£16,400
Total	£29,600 (Exclusive of any VAT payable)

3.2.25 Once the Secretary of State's decision on our report has been notified, and further to our conversations with land managers during the route planning stage, Essex County Council will liaise with affected land owners and occupiers about relevant aspects of the design, installation and maintenance of the new signs and infrastructure that are needed on their land. Prior to works being carried out on the ground, all necessary permissions, authorisations and consents will be obtained. All such works would conform to the published standards for National Trails and the other criteria described in our Coastal Access Scheme.

#### Maintenance of the trail:

3.2.26 Because the trail on this length of coast will form part of the National Trail being created around the whole coast of England called the England Coast Path, we envisage that it will be maintained to the same high quality standards as other National Trails in England (see The New Deal; Management of National Trails in England from April 2013: details at Annex A of the Overview).

3.2.27 We estimate that the annual cost to maintain the trail will be £6,720 (exclusive of any VAT payable). In developing this estimate we have taken account of the formula used to calculate Natural England's contribution to the maintenance of other National Trails.

## Part 3.3: Proposals Tables

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

#### 3.3.1 Section Details - Maps SWI 3a to SWI 3f: Little Wakering to Sutton Ford Bridge

Key notes on table:

Column 2 – an asterisk (\*) against the route section number means see also table 3.3.2: Other options considered.

Column 4 – 'No' means no roll-back is proposed for this route section. 'Yes – normal' means roll-back is proposed and is likely to follow the current feature (e.g. cliff edge/beach) for the foreseeable future as any coastal change occurs.

Column 5a - Certain coastal land types are included automatically in the coastal margin where they fall landward of the trail if they touch it at some point. The relevant land type (foreshore, cliff, bank, barrier, dune, beach, flat or section 15 land – see Glossary) is shown in this column where appropriate. "No" means none present on this route section.

Columns 5b and 5c - Any entry in these columns means we are proposing to align the landward boundary of the coastal margin on this route section with the physical feature(s) shown in 5b, for the reason in 5c. No text here means that for this route section the landward edge of the margin would be that of the trail itself - or if any default coastal land type is shown in 5a, that would be its landward boundary instead.

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Current status of route section(s)	Roll-back proposed? (See Part 7 of Overview)	Landward margin contains coastal land type?	Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary proposal	Explanatory notes
3a	SWI-3- S001	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
3a	SWI-3- S002	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	
3a	SWI-3- S003	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	
3a	SWI-3- S004	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
3a	SWI-3- S005	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
3a	SWI-3- S006	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
3a	SWI-3- S007	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
3a	SWI-3- S008	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
3a	SWI-3- S009	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
3а	SWI-3- S010	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Current status of route section(s)	Roll-back proposed? (See Part 7 of Overview)	Landward margin contains coastal land type?	Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary proposal	Explanatory notes
3a	SWI-3- S011	Other existing walked route	No	Yes - Bank			
3a	SWI-3- S012	Other existing walked route	No	Yes - Barrier			Path runs in front of floodgate set into the seabank
За	SWI-3- S013	Other existing walked route	No	Yes - Bank			
3a	SWI-3- S014	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	
3b	SWI-3- S015	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
3c	SWI-3- S016	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
3c	SWI-3- S017	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
3c	SWI-3- S018	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
3c	SWI-3- S019	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
3c	SWI-3- S020	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
3c	SWI-3- S021	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
3с	SWI-3- S022	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
3c	SWI-3- S023*	Not an existing walked route	Yes - normal	Yes - Bank	Ditch	Additional landward area	Additional landward area to allow walkers to use the folding if birds are close to the seabank in order to reduce disturbance
3с	SWI-3- S024*	Not an existing walked route	Yes - normal	No			
3d	SWI-3- S025*	Not an existing walked route	Yes - normal	Yes - Bank	Ditch	Additional landward area	Additional landward area to allow walkers to use the folding if

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Current status of route section(s)	Roll-back proposed? (See Part 7 of Overview)	Landward margin contains coastal land type?	Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary proposal	Explanatory notes
							birds are close to the seabank in order to reduce disturbance
3d	SWI-3- S026*	Not an existing walked route	No	Yes - Bank			
3d	SWI-3- S027*	Not an existing walked route	No	Yes - Bank			
3е	SWI-3- S028*	Not an existing walked route	No	Yes - Bank	Ditch	Additional landward area	Additional landward area to allow walkers to use the folding if birds are close to the seabank in order to reduce disturbance
3f	SWI-3- S029*	Not an existing walked route	No	Yes - Bank			
3f	SWI-3- S030*	Not an existing walked route	No	No			
3f	SWI-3- S031*	Not an existing walked route	No	No			
3f	SWI-3- S032	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	

3.3.2 Other options considered: Maps SWI 3c to SWI 3f: Roper's Farm to Sutton Ford Bridge, Rochford

Map(s)	Route section numbers(s)	Other option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
SWI 3c to SWI 3f	SWI-3-S023 to SWI-3- S031	We considered aligning the trail inland along the public footpath (FP2) past Roach Farm, via the bridleway (BW11) through Butler's Farm and the grass verge adjacent to Shopland Road to meet the pavement, at Fleet Hall Chase	<ul> <li>We opted for the proposed route because:</li> <li>it is safer, and more pleasant to walk along because it avoids a section of busy road with no pavement (Shopland Road)</li> <li>it is closer to the estuary and maintains good views of it</li> <li>it is supported by the landowner</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>
SWI 3f	SWI-3-S029 to SWI-3- S032	We considered aligning the trail along the lower seabank to the west of Fleet Hall and continuing through private land at Sutton Hall Farm to Sutton Hall Bridge	<ul> <li>We opted for the proposed route because:</li> <li>it is supported by the landowner and Essex County Council</li> <li>the cost to establish the lower seabank route was significantly more expensive and in our view not cost effective</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>
SWI 3f	SWI-3-S029 to SWI-3- S031	We considered aligning the trail along the track through Fleet Hall and past the former school to its junction with Shopland Road	We opted for the proposed route because the area of land around Fleet Hall is excepted land (buildings, curtilage and garden) and hence would not be accessible by right unless access rights were dedicated by the land owner 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

Map(s)	Route section numbers(s)	Other option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
SWI 3f	SWI-3-S029 to SWI-3- S031	We considered aligning the trail through woodland west of Fleet Hall, curving east along the edge of paddocks and continuing south along the track past the former school to Shopland Road	<ul> <li>We opted for the proposed route because:</li> <li>it provides a more direct onward route with a pleasant walking experience</li> <li>it was supported by the landowner</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>

Note: Any public rights of way not forming part of the proposed trail would remain available for people to use under their pre-existing rights.

# Part 3.4: Proposals Maps

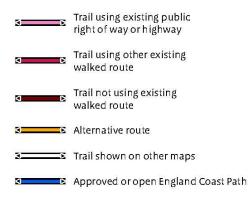
#### 3.4.1 Map Index

Map reference	Map title
SWI 3a	Little Wakering to Barling Hall
SWI 3b	Barling Hall to Roper's Farm
SWI 3c	Roper's Farm to Mucking Hall
SWI 3d	Mucking Hall to Butler's Farm
SWI 3e	Butler's Farm to Fleet Hall
SWI 3f	Fleet Hall to Sutton Ford Bridge, Rochford
Directions Map SWI 3A	Directions for Report SWI 3: Little Wakering to Sutton Ford Bridge
Directions Map SWI 3B	Directions for Report SWI 3: Little Wakering to Sutton Ford Bridge



#### PROPOSALS

#### Trail Sections



Maps that show sections of the trail that follow the existing South West Coast Path as currently walked and managed use the following trail categories. Information on the existing status and infrastructure is not shown.



K - - K

Trail using existing South West Coast Path

Alternative or optional alternative route using existing South West Coast Path

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

- BW Public bridleway
- BY Public byway
- CP Cycletrack (pedestrian)
- CT Cycletrack (cycles only)
- FP Public footpath
- FW Public footway (Pavement)
- RB Restricted byway
- RD Public road

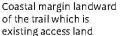
#### **Coastal Margin**

#### Explanatory note

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.

Coastal margin landward of the trail





#### Other Information

Other access rights and routes

- Public bridleways
- -++ Public byways
- Public footpaths
- · · · Restricted byways
- South West Coast Path
- Sustrans national routes

#### Existing access land

#### Infrastructure types

For status of each, where shown on map, see colour codes below



#### Infrastructure status

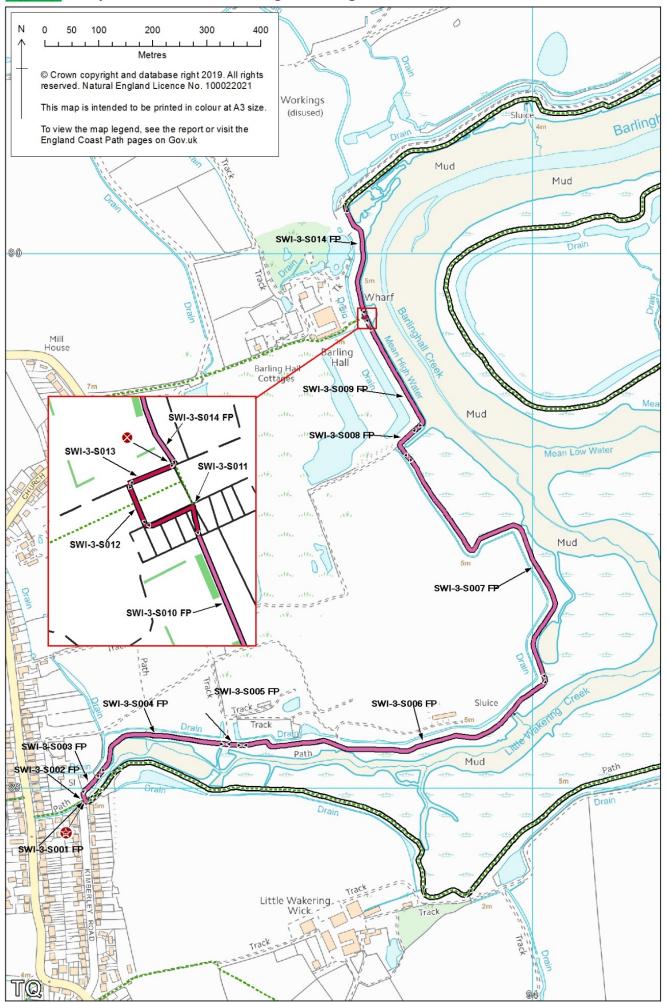
Each symbol shown on the map is colour coded as appropriate, as in this example for a set of steps:

 Existing steps to be retained
 New steps required
 Existing steps to be removed

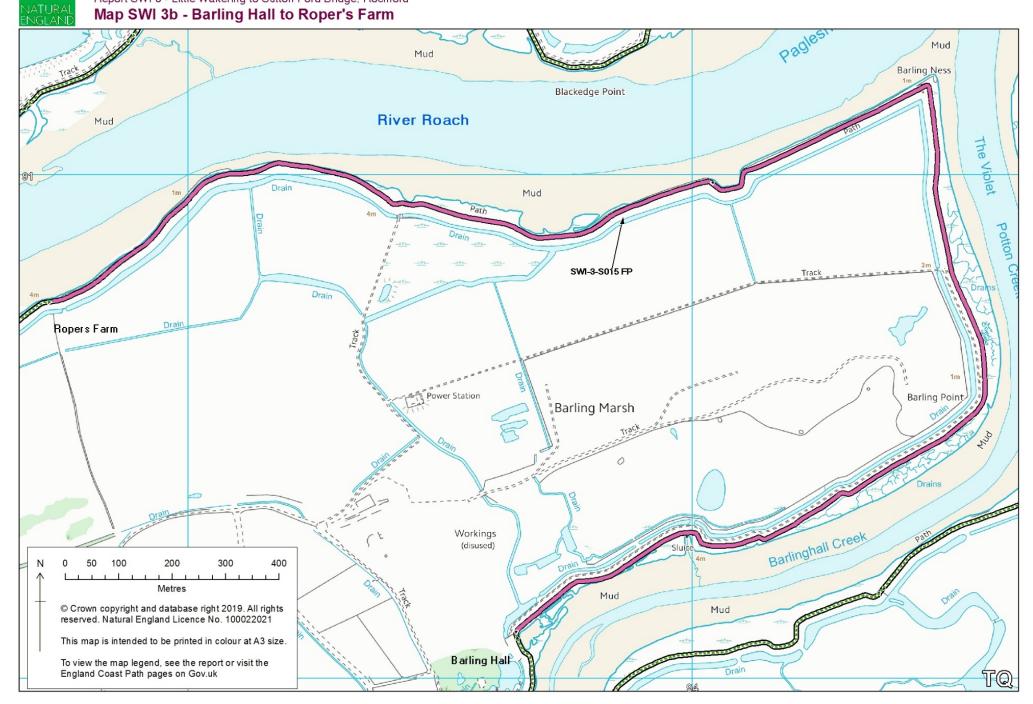
\* Please note that the items in this legend may not all be present on an individual map or report.



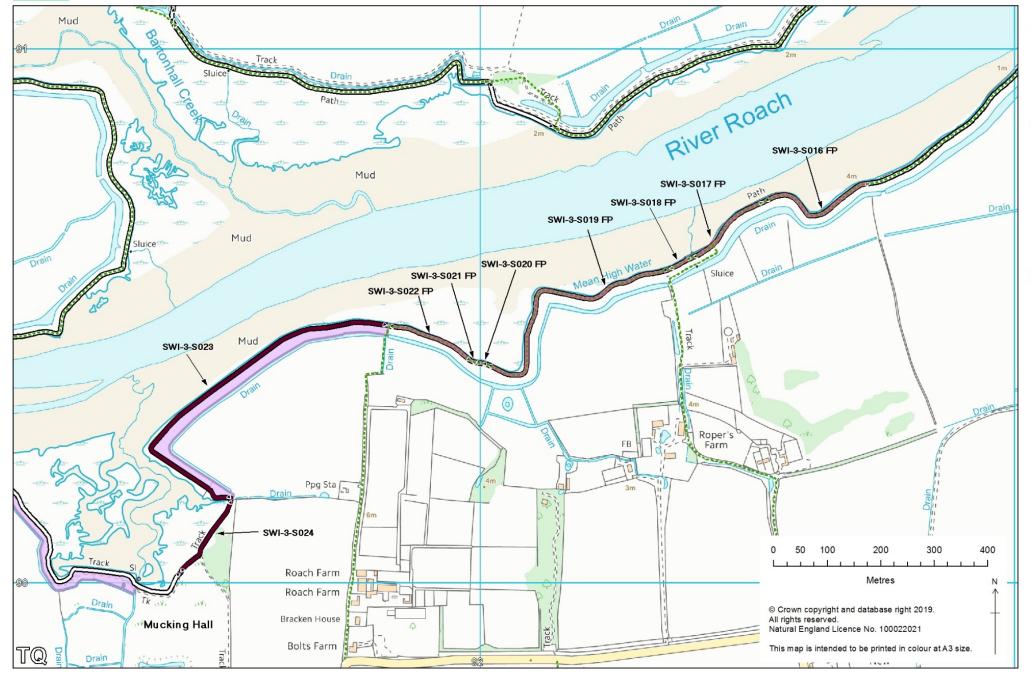
#### Map SWI 3a - Little Wakering to Barling Hall



Coastal Access - Southend-on-Sea to Wallasea Island - Natural England's Proposals Report SWI 3 - Little Wakering to Sutton Ford Bridge, Rochford Map SWI 3b - Barling Hall to Roper's Farm



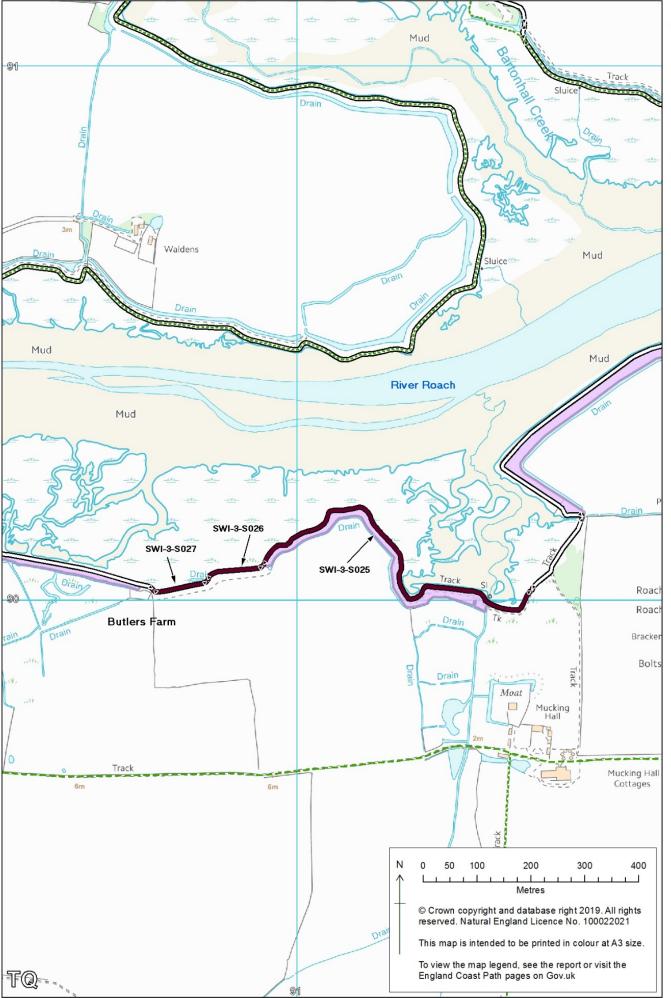
Coastal Access - Southend -on-Sea to Wallasea Island - Natural England's Proposals Report SWI 3 - Little Wakering to Sutton Ford Bridge, Rochford Map SWI 3c - Roper's Farm to Mucking Hall





Coastal Access - Southend-on-Sea to Wallasea Island - Natural England's Proposals Report SWI 3 - Little Wakering to Sutton Ford Bridge, Rochford

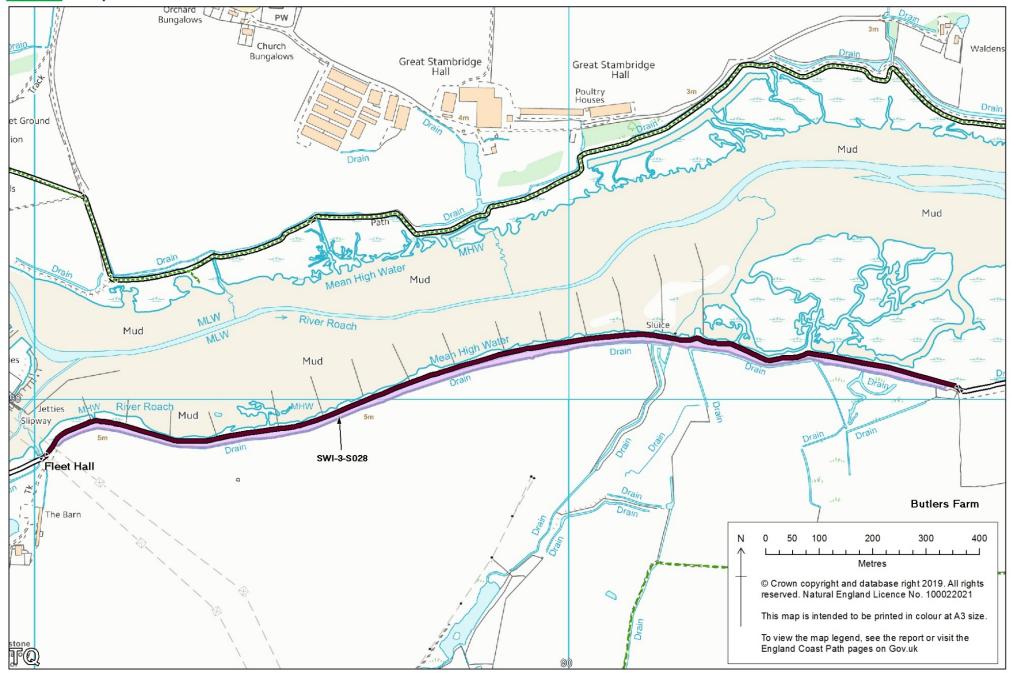
#### Map SWI 3d - Mucking Hall to Butler's Farm



Map SWI 3d - Mucking Hall to Butler's Farm

Coastal Access - Southend-on-Sea to Wallasea Island - Natural England's Proposals Report SWI 3 - Little Wakering to Sutton Ford Bridge, Rochford

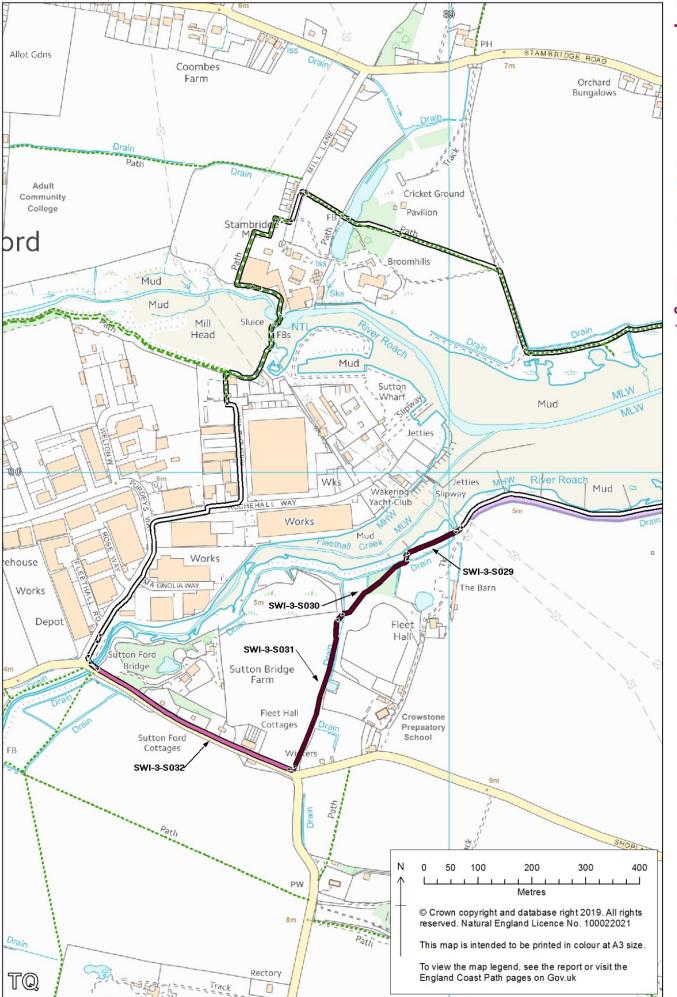
#### Map SWI 3e - Butler's Farm to Fleet Hall



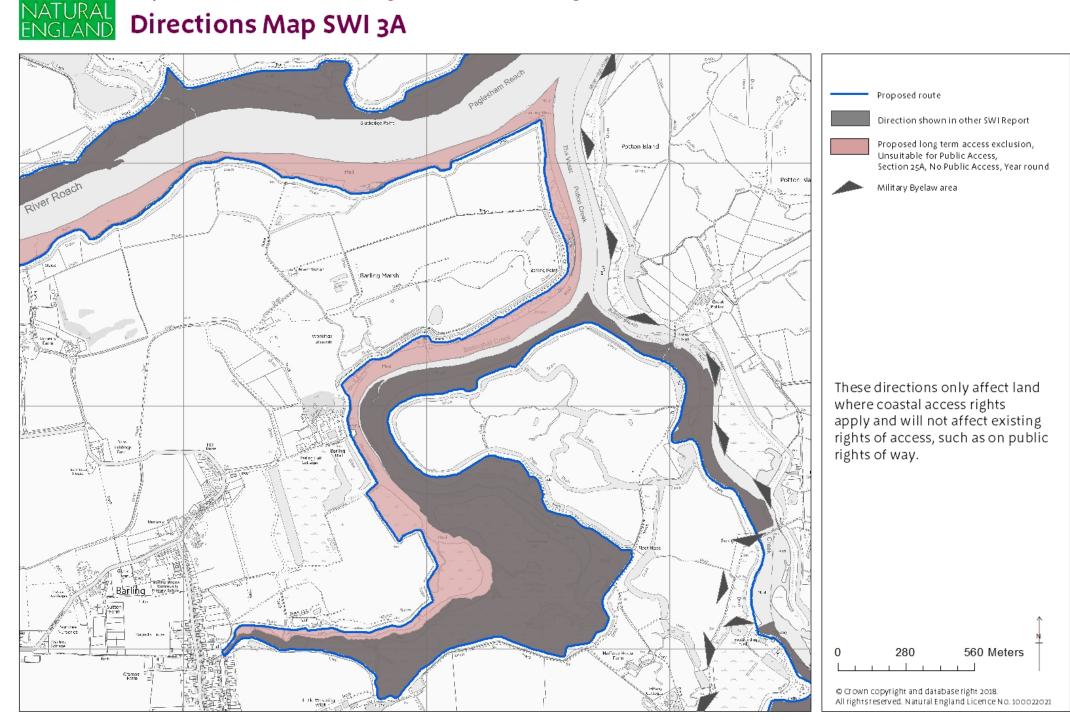


Coastal Access - Southend-on-Sea to Wallasea Island - Natural England's Proposals Report SWI 3 - Little Wakering to Sutton Ford Bridge, Rochford

#### Map SWI 3f - Fleet Hall to Sutton Ford Bridge, Rochford



# Coastal Access - Southend -On-Sea to Wallasea Island - Natural England's Proposals Report SWI 3 : Little Wakering to Sutton Ford Bridge Directions Map SWI 3A



# Coastal Access - Southend -On-Sea to Wallasea Island - Natural England's Proposals Report SWI 3 : Little Wakering to Sutton Ford Bridge

**Directions Map SWI 3B** 

