

## Chapter 8:

# Sid Estuary to Axe Estuary

England Coast Path: Kingswear to Lyme Regis - Natural England's Proposals

## Part 8.1: Introduction

<b>Start Point:</b>	<b>Sid Estuary</b> (grid reference: SY 1288 8732)
<b>End Point:</b>	<b>Axe Estuary</b> (grid reference: SY 2526 8997)
<b>Relevant Maps:</b>	<b>8a to 8i</b>

### Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps:

#### The Trail:

- 8.1.1 Follows the existing South West Coast Path as currently walked and managed between the Sid Estuary and the Axe Estuary (route sections KLR-8-S001 to KLR-8-S078). The South West Coast Path mainly follows public rights of way along this length.
- 8.1.2 Mainly follows the coastline quite closely and generally maintains good views of the sea, apart from near Sidmouth and Seaton where the route moves inland to avoid areas of landslip and private residences.
- 8.1.3 We propose to adopt the line of the South West Coast Path along this section of coast. There are places where the existing walked route of the South West Coast Path over this length differs slightly from the route originally approved by the Secretary of State, as the path has adapted over time to cope with coastal erosion and other processes. Assuming these proposals are approved, we intend both routes to follow the same line. As explained at part 5a of the Overview, we use a separate variation report to the Secretary of State to change the existing approved route of the national trail line to reflect the approved line of the England Coast Path wherever appropriate.
- 8.1.4 This part of the coast includes the following sites, designated for nature conservation or heritage preservation (See map C of the Overview):
- Sidmouth to West Bay Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
  - Lyme Bay and Torbay Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
  - Sidmouth to Beer Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

- Prehistoric field system on the cliffs above Littlecombe Shoot Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM)
- Berry Cliff Camp Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM)

8.1.5 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 'Protection of sensitive features' for more information.**

#### **Accessibility:**

8.1.6 The proposed route makes use of existing surface paths wherever these meet the criteria in the Coastal Access Scheme.

However, there are places along this length of coast where it may not be entirely suitable for people with reduced mobility because:

- The trail would follow an uneven grass or bare soil path along the majority of this stretch;
- There are steps along the trail where it would be necessary to ascend/descend, for example at Salcombe Hill Cliff and Weston Mouth.
- There are kissing gates at many points along this section including around Branscombe and Berry Cliff,
- There are several footbridges with steps including across the river Sid, north of Salcombe Mouth and at Branscombe Mouth.

**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 Section 3 of the Overview.

8.1.7 Estuary: The report proposes that the trail should extend upstream from the open coast:

- as far as Alma Bridge across the River Sid. The bridge is located a very short distance above the transitional water limit and is the first public foot crossing point over the river;
- as far as Axmouth Bridge which is the first public foot crossing point over the River Axe.

8.1.8 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. See table 8.2.1 below.

- 8.1.9 At Salcombe Hill Cliff we have used our discretion to propose the inclusion of an additional, more extensive landward area within the coastal margin (route sections KLR-8-S007 to KLR-8-S009), to secure or enhance public enjoyment of this part of the coast. The owner of this land (National Trust) is content for us to propose this. See map 8a and Table 8.2.1 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'.**

- 8.1.10 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.

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

- 8.1.11 There are no additional measures that we consider necessary to improve the safety or convenience of the trail on this length of coast.
- 8.1.12 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:**

- 8.1.13 The current footbridge over the River Sid, Alma Bridge, and the cliff it is fixed to are frequently subject to damage and erosion from high tides and storms. Devon County Council are investigating an appropriate solution and have proposed to remove this bridge and relocate the crossing point with a new footbridge positioned inland of the current location. At the time of writing this report the design of the bridge and the exact location are undergoing consultation and therefore yet to be confirmed. When Alma Bridge is removed and the new footbridge is opened, the England Coast Path will roll back and follow this new route across the river.
- 8.1.14 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 table 8.2.3 below for details of the sections likely to be affected in the foreseeable future.
- 8.1.15 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 5f 'Coastal processes' and 8 'Future changes' of the Overview for more information.**

## Part 8.2: Commentary on Maps

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

### 8.2.1 Section Details Maps 8a to 8i: Sid Estuary to Axe Estuary

Notes on table:

Column 2 – an asterisk (\*) against the route section number means see also table 8.2.2: 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 8.2.3’ 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
Maps	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)
8a	KLR-8-S001 to KLR-8-S003	Yes - See table 8.2.3	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-8-S004	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-8-S005	No	Road	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-8-S006	No	Hedge bank	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-8-S007 to KLR-8-S009	Yes - Normal	Fence line	Additional landward area	None
	KLR-8-S010	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
8b	KLR-8-S011 to KLR-8-S021	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
8c	KLR-8-S022 to KLR-8-S024	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	KLR-8-S025	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of beach or flat	Not used	None
	KLR-8-S026 to KLR-8-S027	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	KLR-8-S028 to KLR-8-S029	Yes - Normal	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-8-S030	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	KLR-8-S031	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
8d	KLR-8-S032	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	KLR-8-S033	Yes - Normal	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-8-S034	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
8e	KLR-8-S035	Yes - Normal	Track	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-8-S036	Yes - Normal	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-8-S037	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	KLR-8-S038	Yes - Normal	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-8-S039	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	KLR-8-S040	Yes - See table 8.2.3	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	KLR-8-S041 to KLR-8-S042	Yes - See table 8.2.3	Track	Clarity and cohesion	None
8f	KLR-8-S043	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	KLR-8-S044	Yes - Normal	Track	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-8-S045 to KLR-8-S050	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of cliffs	Not used	None
	KLR-8-S051	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
8g	KLR-8-S052	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	KLR-8-S053	Yes - Normal	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-8-S054 to KLR-8-S055	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	KLR-8-S056	Yes - Normal	Hedgerow	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-8-S057 to KLR-8-S060	No	Hedgerow	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-8-S061	Yes - See table 8.2.3	Road	Clarity and cohesion	None



1	2	3	4a	4b	5
Maps	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)
8g	KLR-8-S062	No	Path	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-8-S063	Yes - Normal	Path	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-8-S064	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	None
8h	KLR-8-S065 to KLR-8-S066	Yes - Normal	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-8-S067	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-8-S068	No	Road	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-8-S069*	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-8-S070* to KLR-8-S071*	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	KLR-8-S072*	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	None
8i	KLR-8-S073* to KLR-8-S074*	No	Path	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-8-S075	No	Promenade edge	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-8-S076 to KLR-8-S078	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	None

### 8.2.2 Other options considered: Maps 8a to 8i: Sid Estuary to Axe Estuary

Map(s)	Section number(s)	Option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option as the route
8h & 8i	KLR-8-S069 to KLR-8-S074	We considered aligning the trail along the beach at Seaton Hole.	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the beach is only passable for approximately an hour after low tide</li> <li>after this time (and before high tide) the only means of crossing from Seaton Hole to Seaton is by climbing over the rock armour at the landward edge of the beach. This was judged to be unsuitable for the trail</li> <li>under our proposals the beach would remain available for people to use as part of the spreading room, but would not form part of the designated trail</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>
8h & 8i	KLR-8-S069 to KLR-8-S074	We investigated whether the trail could be aligned along Old Beer Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We opted for the proposed route because:</li> <li>Old Beer Road is impassable due to a large landslip and Devon County Council advised that this route was unsafe for use.</li> </ul>

### 8.2.3 Roll-back implementation – more complex situations: Maps 8a to 8i: Sid Estuary to Axe Estuary

Map(s)	Section number(s)	Feature or site potentially affected	How we will manage roll-back in relation to this feature or site
8a	KLR-8-S001 to KLR-8-S003	Footbridge	The current footbridge over the River Sid, Alma Bridge, is frequently subject to damage from high tides and storms and associated erosion of the cliff to which it is anchored. A new bridge is proposed inland of the current location. When the current bridge is removed and a new footbridge is open a short distance upstream the England Coast Path will follow this new route across the river.
8e	KLR-8-S040 to KLR-8-S042	Cafe	If it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of the specified excepted land (e.g. buildings, curtilage, gardens etc), we will choose a route landward of it, following discussions with owners and occupiers.
8g	KLR-8-S061	Houses	If it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of the specified 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 8.3: Chapter 8 - Formal Proposals

- Below are our formal proposals to the Secretary of State for the length of coast shown on maps 8a to 8i.
- They should be read in conjunction with the relevant maps.
- The commentary above explains the practical effect of these proposals.

### Formal Proposals – Sid Estuary to Axe Estuary

#### Discretion to include an estuary

- 8.3.1 Natural England proposes to exercise its functions as if the sea included the estuarial waters of the River Sid as far as the Alma Bridge and the River Axe as far as Axmouth Bridge as indicated by the extent of the trail shown on maps 8a and 8i.

#### Proposed route of the trail

- 8.3.2 In relation to route sections KLR-8-S004 to KLR-8-S006, KLR-8-S031, KLR-8-S057 to KLR-8-S060, KLR-8-S062, KLR-8-S064, and KLR-8-S067 to KLR-8-S078 the route is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps 8a, 8c, 8g, 8h and 8i as the proposed route of the trail.
- 8.3.3 In relation to route sections KLR-8-S001 to KLR-8-S003, KLR-8-S007 to KLR-8-S030, KLR-8-S032 to KLR-8-S056, KLR-8-S061, KLR-8-S063 and KLR-8-S065 to KLR-8-S066 the route, as initially determined at the time the report was prepared, is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps 8a to 8h as the proposed route of the trail.
- 8.3.4 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

- 8.3.5 Adjacent to route sections KLR-8-S007 to KLR-8-S009 the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the existing boundary fence, as indicated by the coastal margin landward of the trail on map 8a.
- 8.3.6 Adjacent to route sections KLR-8-S001 to KLR-8-S003, KLR-8-S028 to KLR-8-S029, KLR-8-S033, KLR-8-S036, KLR-8-S038, KLR-8-S053 and KLR-8-S064 to KLR-8-S067 the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the existing fence line which at the time of writing this report is at the landward edge of the trail shown on maps 8a, 8c, 8d, 8e, 8g and 8h.
- 8.3.7 Adjacent to route section KLR-8-S006 the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the existing hedge bank which at the time of writing this report is at the landward edge of the

trail shown on map 8a.

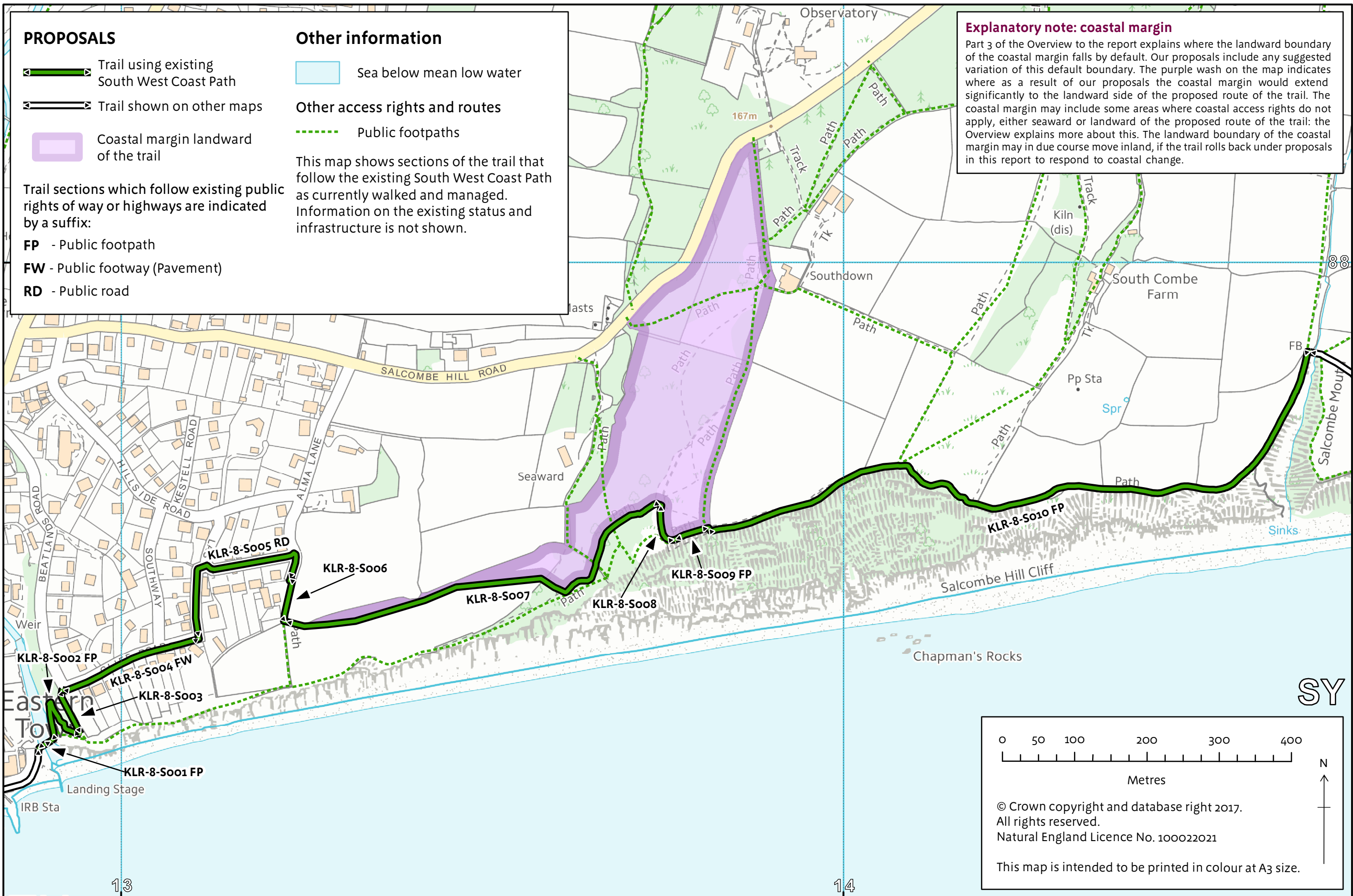
- 8.3.8 Adjacent to route sections KL6-8-S045 to KLR-8-S050, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the top of the cliff face, which at the time of writing this report is landward of the trail shown on map 8f.
- 8.3.9 Adjacent to route sections KLR-8-S056 to KLR-8-S060 the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the existing hedgerow which at the time of writing this report is at the landward edge of the trail shown on map 8g.
- 8.3.10 Adjacent to route sections KLR-8-S004, KLR-8-S069, KLR-8-S072 and KLR-8-S076 to KLR-8-S078 the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the pavement shown as the trail on maps 8a, 8h and 8i.
- 8.3.11 Adjacent to route sections KLR-8-S005, KLR-8-S061 and KLR-8-S068 the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the road shown as the trail on map 8a, 8g and 8h.
- 8.3.12 Adjacent to route sections KLR-8-S035, KLR-8-S041 to KLR-8-S042 and KLR-8-S044, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the track shown as the trail on maps 8e and 8f.
- 8.3.13 Adjacent to route sections KLR-8-S062 to KLR-8-S063 and KLR-8-S073 to KLR-8-S074, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the path shown as the trail on maps 8g and 8i.
- 8.3.14 Adjacent to route section KLR-8-S075 the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the promenade shown as the trail on map 8i.

### **Local restrictions and exclusions**

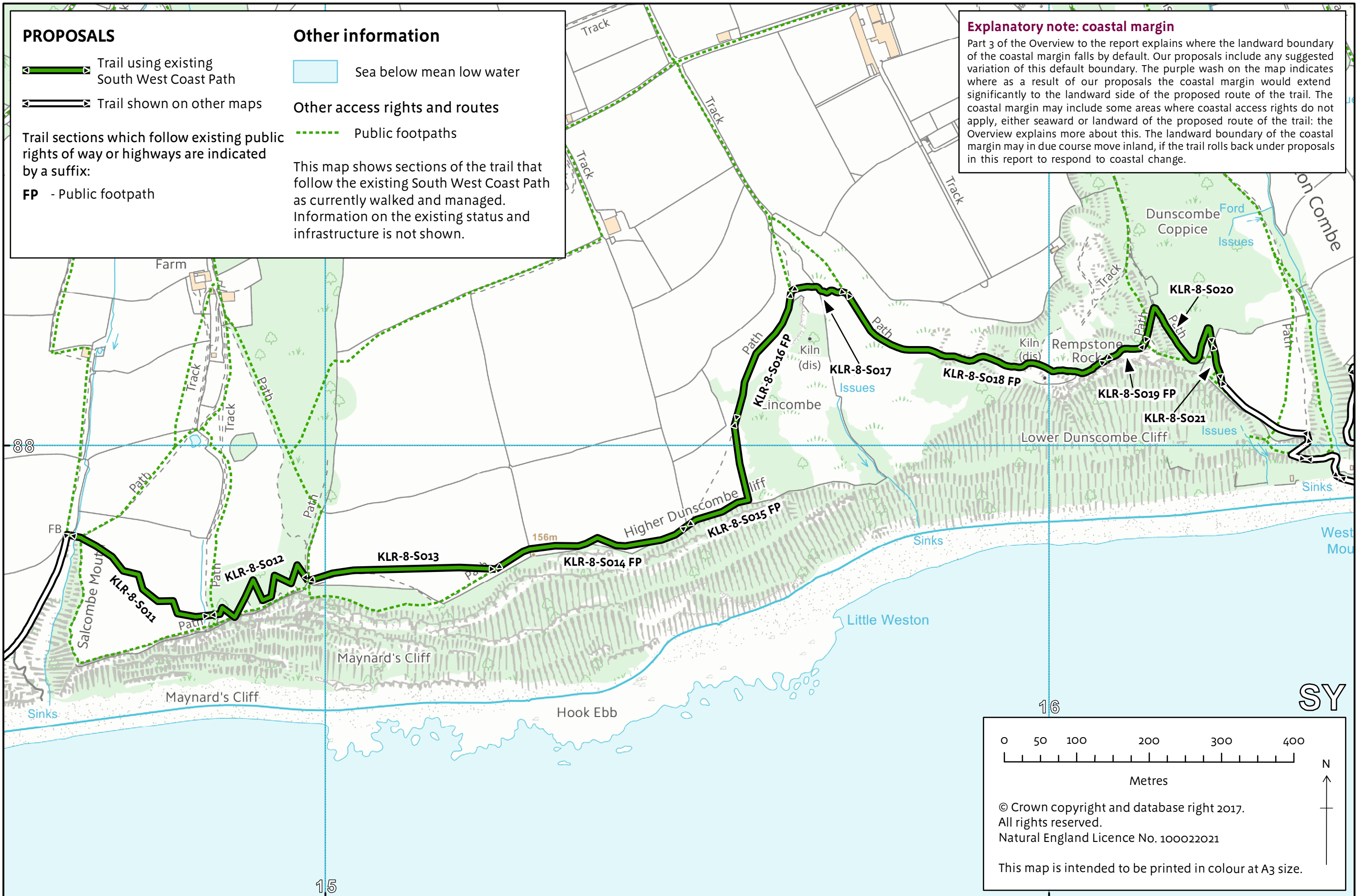
- 8.3.15 At the time of writing this report, there are no proposals for local restrictions or exclusions in relation to this length of coast.

### **Alternative routes**

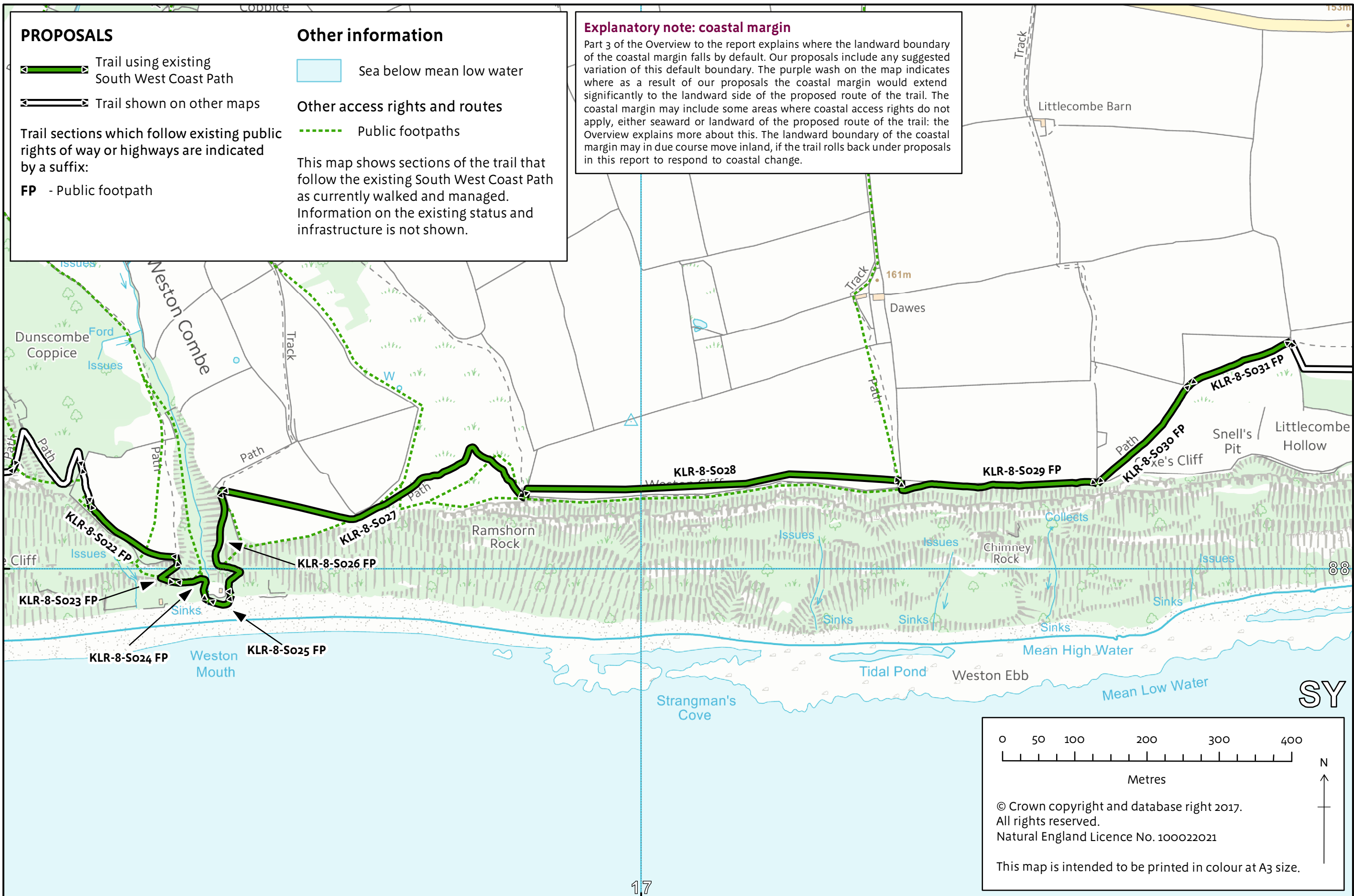
- 8.3.16 There are no proposals for alternative routes in relation to this length of coast.



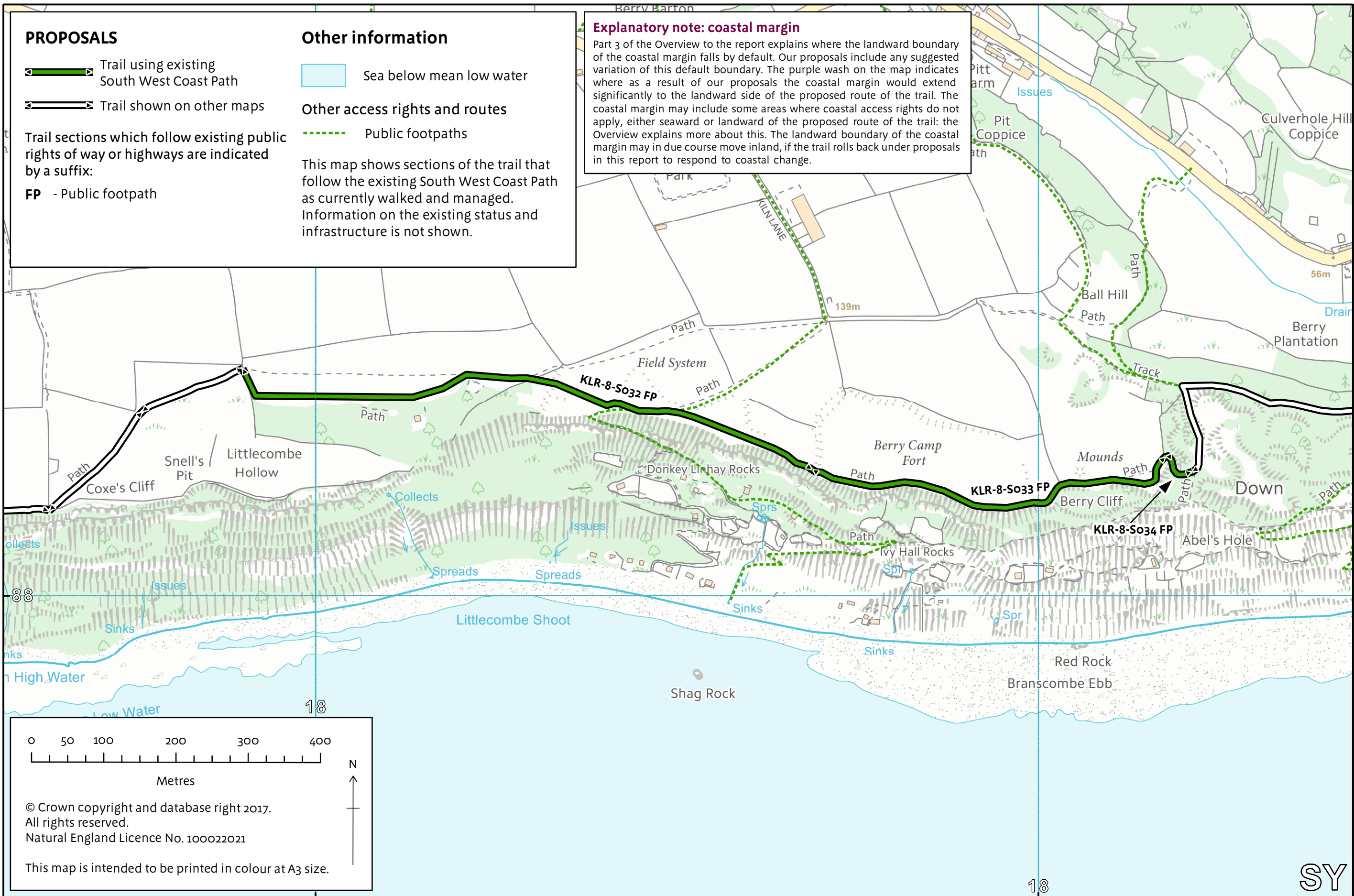




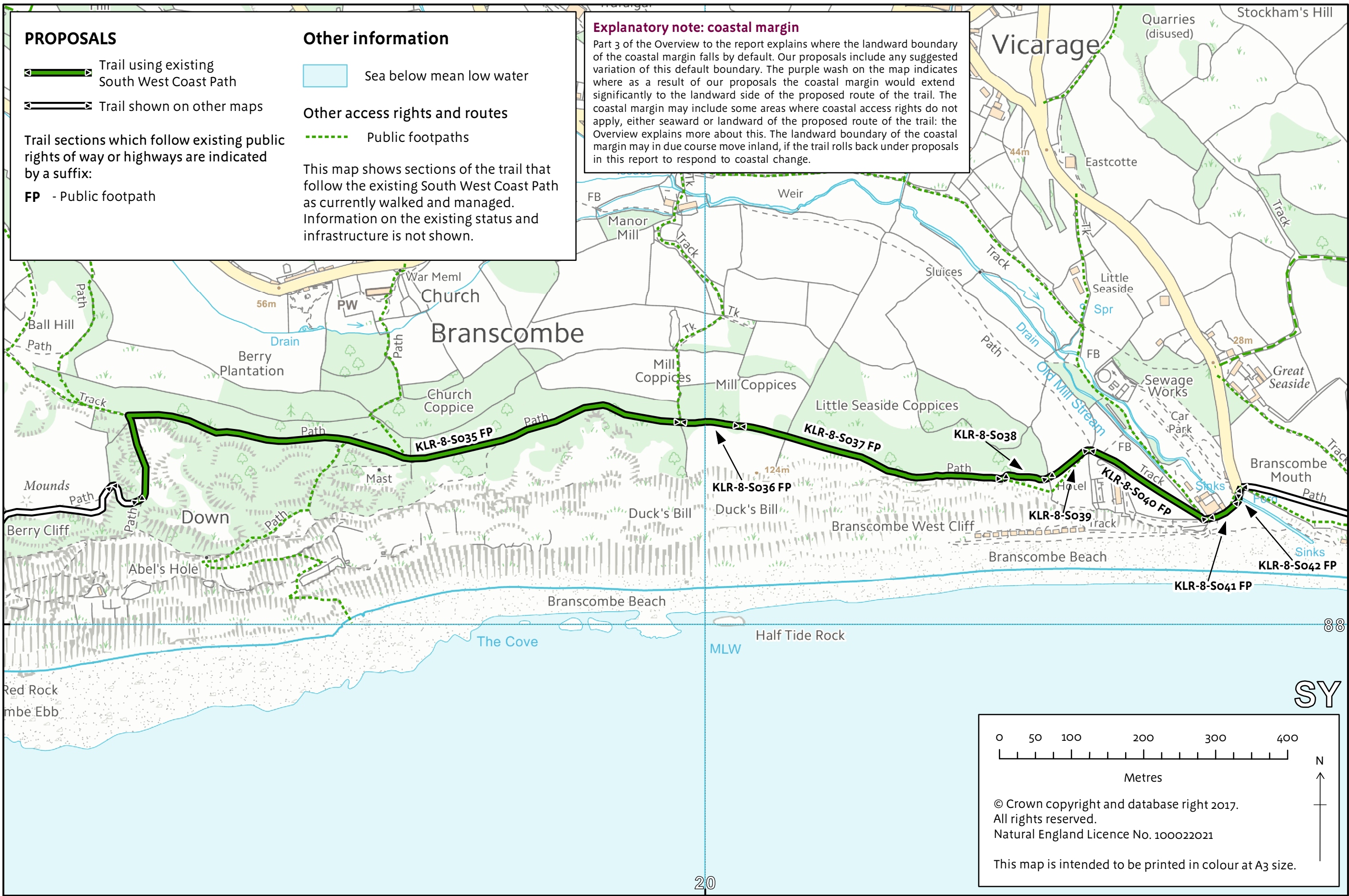
Map 8b Salcombe Mouth to Lower Dunscombe Cliff

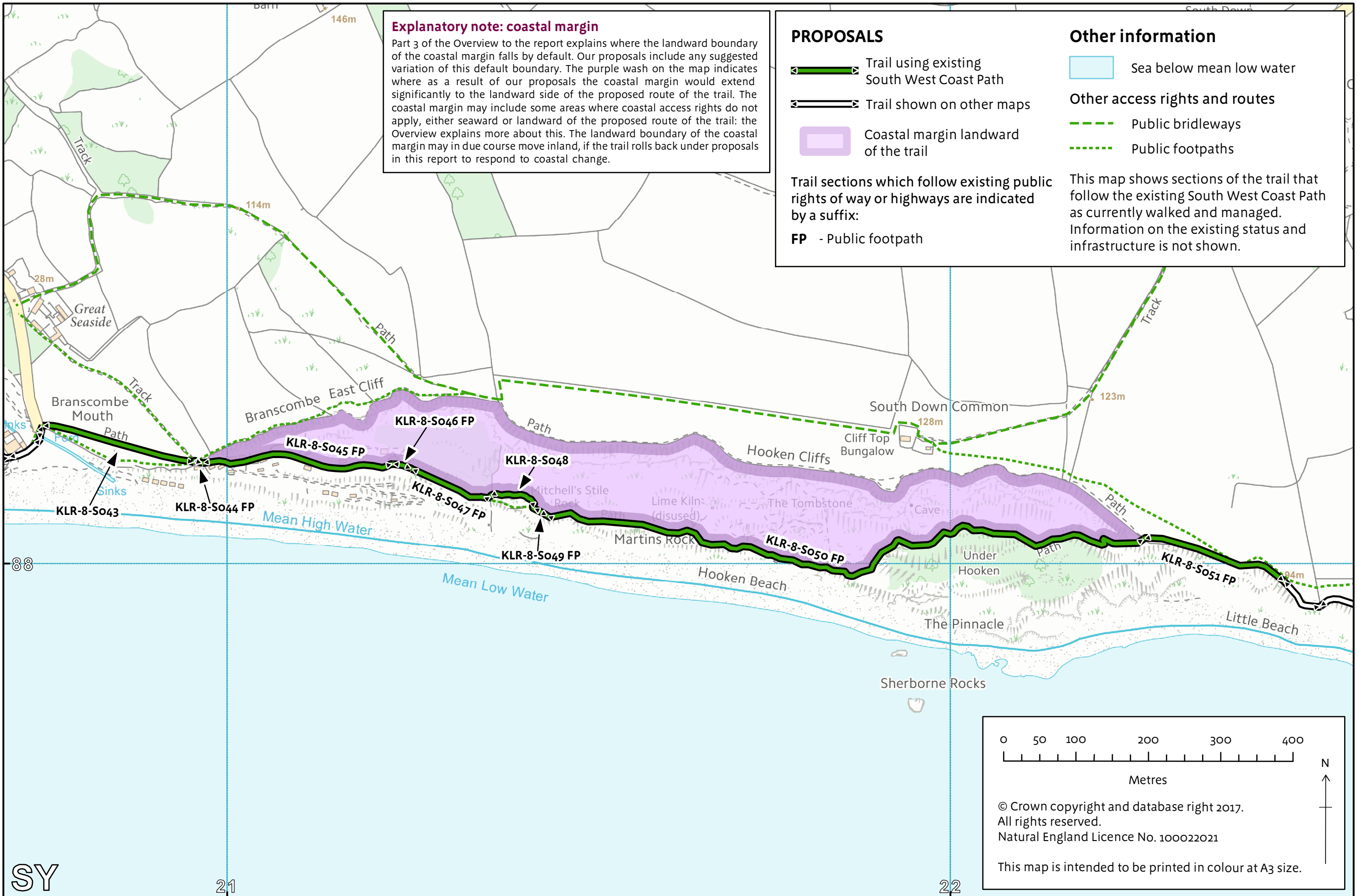




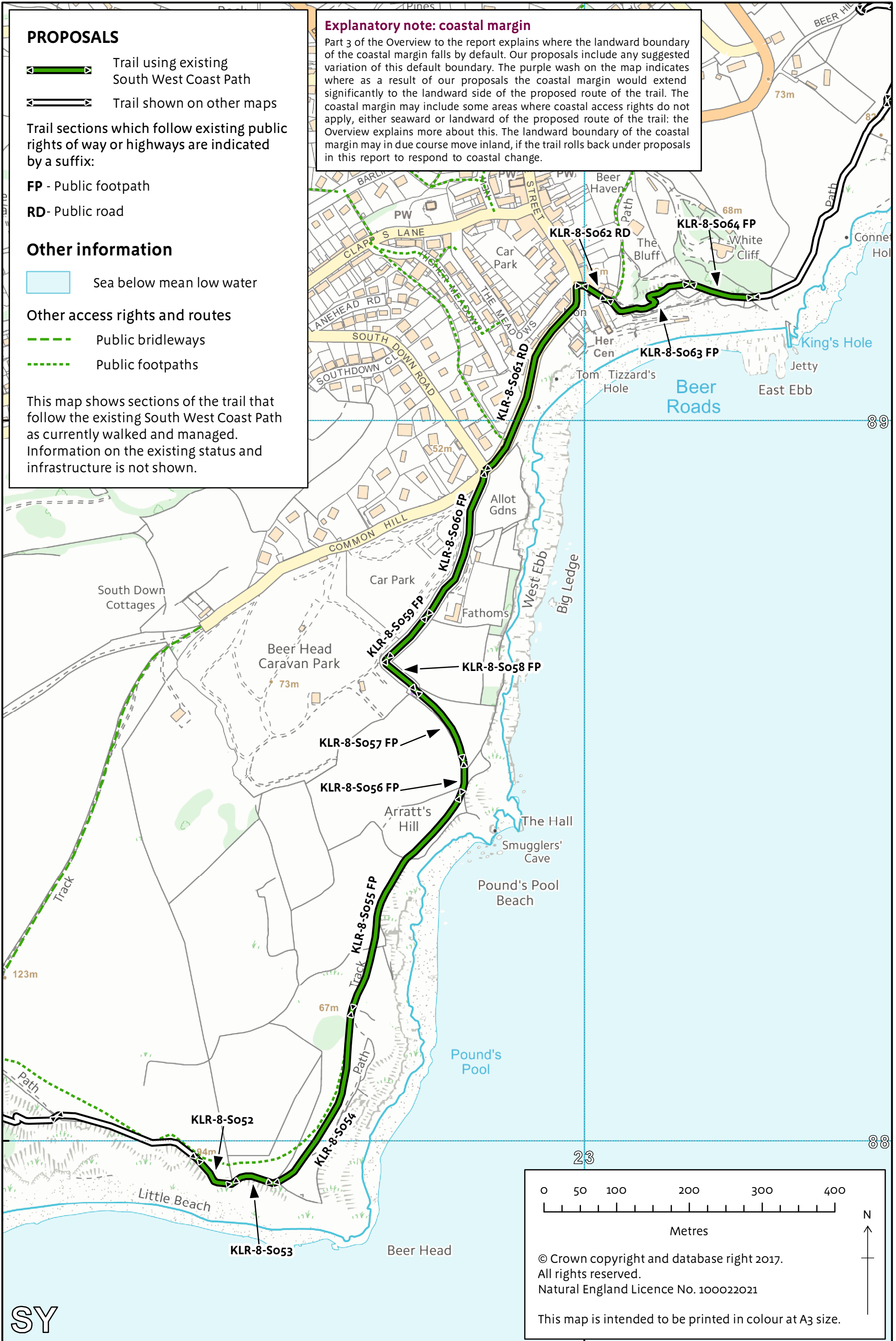




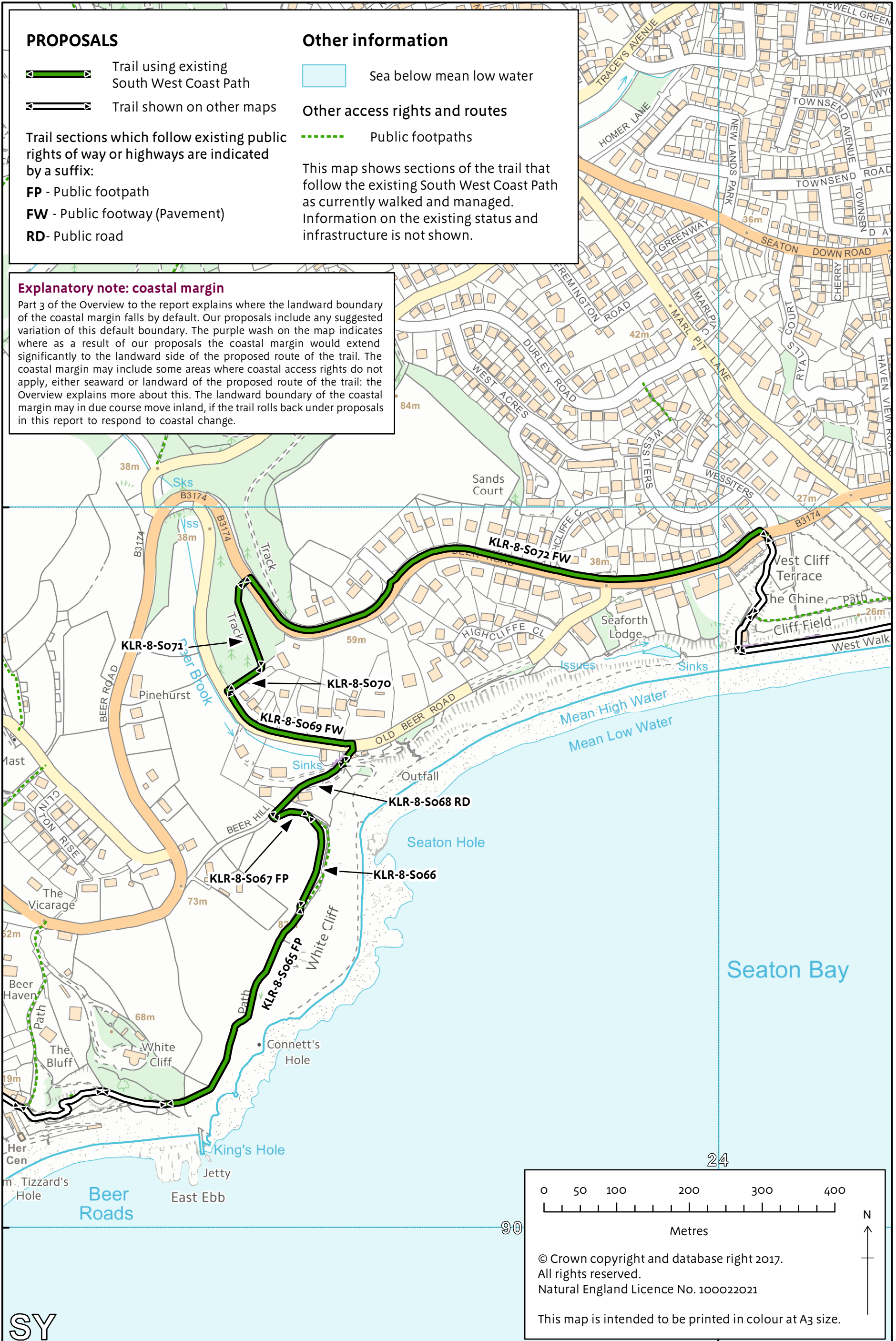
















**Explanatory note: coastal margin**

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 existing South West Coast Path
-  Trail shown on other maps


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

- FP** - Public footpath
- FW** - Public footway (Pavement)

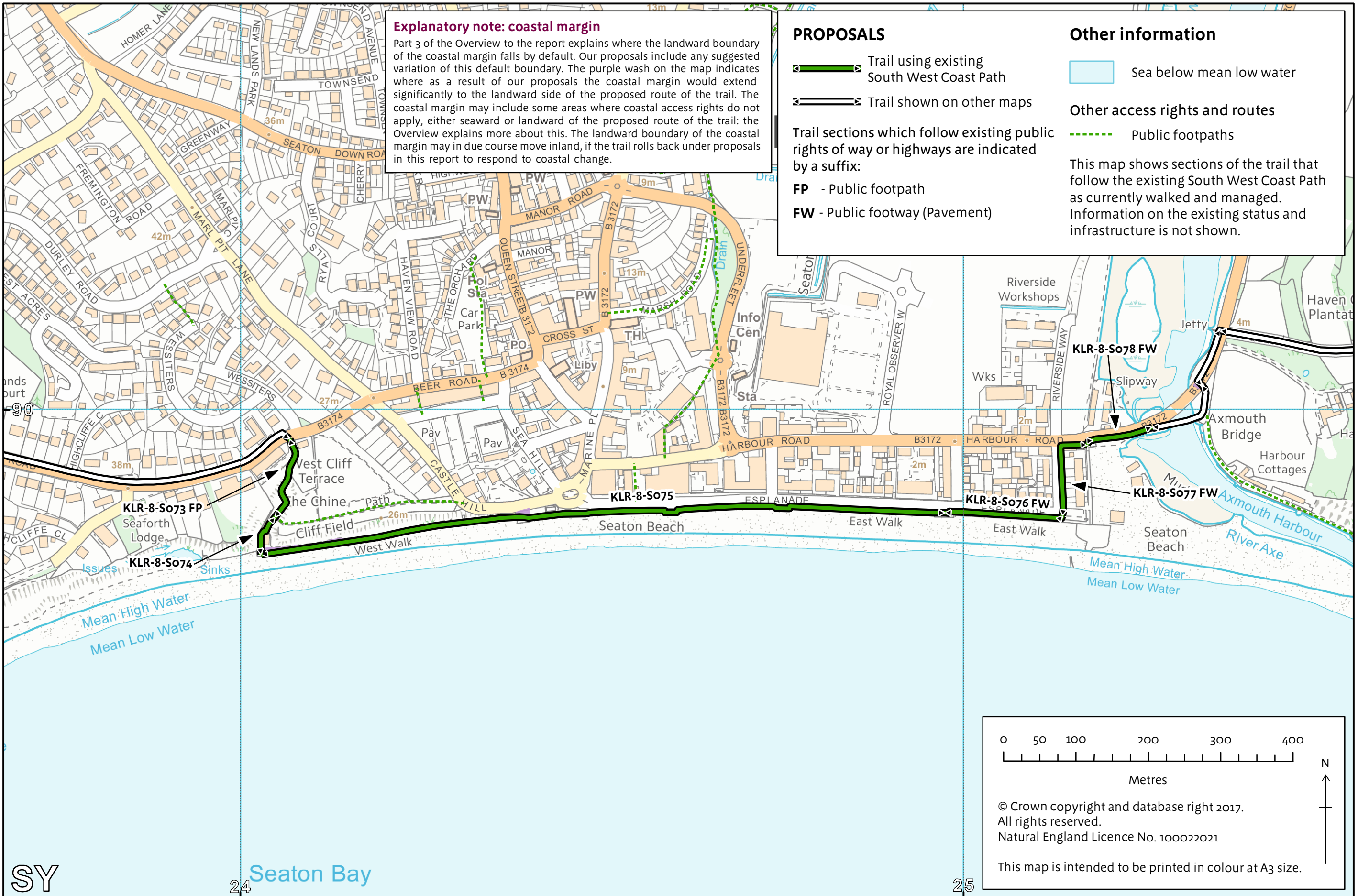
**Other information**

-  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.



Map 8i West Cliff Terrace to Axmouth Bridge

0 50 100 200 300 400  
 Metres

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