

Chapter 2:

Hurlstone Combe to Worthy

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

Part 2.1: Introduction

Start Point:	Hurlstone Combe (grid reference: SS 8991 4894)
End Point:	Worthy (grid reference: SS 8584 4818)
Relevant Maps:	2a to 2d

Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps:

The Trail:

- 2.1.1 Follows the existing South West Coast Path as currently walked and managed between the base of Hurlstone Combe and Porlock Weir (route sections MCM-2-S001 to MCM-2-S017). The existing South West Coast Path mainly follows public rights of way along this length. See maps 2a to 2c and associated table 2.2.1 below for more details.
- 2.1.2 Differs from the existing South West Coast Path along a 1km length between Porlock Weir and Worthy (route sections MCM-2-S018 to MCM-2-S028). This new length initially follows the existing bridleway alongside Porlock Dock out towards Gore Point, then runs along the shingle beach, before heading inland through a field to the west of Worthy stream and then climbs through woodland to rejoin the existing coast path route west of Worthy Toll House. It also provides a short circular walk between Porlock Weir and Worthy. See map 2d and associated table 2.2.2 below for details.
- 2.1.3 The South West Coast Path generally follows the coast quite closely over this length (apart from at Porlock Bay where it follows the landward side of Porlock Marsh) and maintains good views of the sea. The new length of the England Coast Path between Porlock Weir and Worthy has significantly improved views of the coastline, particularly from the beach around Gore Point.
- 2.1.4 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 (see paragraph 2.1.2) 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.

2.1.5 This part of the coast includes the following sites, designated for nature conservation or heritage preservation (See map C of the Overview):

- Exmoor Heaths Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Porlock Ridge and Saltmarsh Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

2.1.6 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:

2.1.7 There are few artificial barriers to accessibility on the proposed route, which makes use of existing 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 which in places such as Porlock Marsh may flood at high tide;
- The trail would follow the shingle beach at Porlock Bay (route sections MCM-2-S014 to MCM-2-S016) and Gore Point (route sections MCM-2-S024 and MCM-2-S025) which can be uneven and difficult underfoot.

2.1.8 Along the new trail between Porlock Weir and Worthy (route sections MCM-2-S018 to MCM-2-S028) a new route will be established through the field and woodland. The route will have to have a staircase at either end to climb over the existing hedgebanks and a graded zig zag will be installed in the woodland to avoid the need for steps. No gates are envisaged other than those already existing on the bridleway out to Gore Point. We envisage this happening as 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:

2.1.9 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.

2.1.10 At Hurlstone Combe (route section MCM-2-S001) and at Porlock Marsh (route sections MCM-

2-S008 to MCM-2-S010), we have used our discretion to propose the inclusion of additional, more extensive landward areas 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 maps 2a and 2b and the associated table 2.2.1 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'.

2.1.11 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. We have not used our discretion to propose any additional restrictions or exclusions on this part of the coast.

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

Establishment and ongoing management of the trail

2.1.12 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.

2.1.13 For the new section between Porlock Weir and Worthy (route sections MCM-2-S018 to MCM-2-S028), 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 clearance of the ramp of the limekiln to gain access from the beach, installation of a new path through the field near Wentworth with a bund to separate it from residential property and a graded slope up through the woodland to rejoin the existing coast path route. Wooden staircases will be required to climb over hedgebanks at either end of this new route.

2.1.14 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:

2.1.15 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 2.2.1 below for details of the sections that may be affected in the foreseeable future.

2.1.16 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 2.2: Commentary on the maps

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

Table 2.2.1 includes sections of the trail that follow the existing South West Coast Path as currently walked and managed. Table 2.2.2 includes sections of the trail that differ from the existing South West Coast Path.

2.2.1 Details for sections that follow the existing South West Coast Path: Maps 2a to 2c, Hurlstone Combe to Porlock Weir

Notes on table:

Column 2 – an asterisk (*) against the route section number means see also table 2.2.3: 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 2.2.4’ 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)
2a	MCM-2-S001*	Yes - normal	Various	Additional landward area	None
	MCM-2-S002	Yes - normal	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	None
	MCM-2-S003	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	MCM-2-S004	Yes - normal	Road	Clarity and cohesion	None
	MCM-2-S005	Yes - normal	Track	Clarity and cohesion	None
	MCM-2-S006	Yes - normal	Hedgerow	Clarity and cohesion	None
2b	MCM-2-S007	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	MCM-2-S008 to MCM-2-S010	Yes - normal	Hedgerow	Additional landward area	None
	MCM-2-S011 and MCM-2-S012	Yes - normal	Hedgerow	Clarity and cohesion	None
2c	MCM-2-S013	Yes - normal	Hedgerow	Clarity and cohesion	None
	MCM-2-S014* to MCM-2-S017*	Yes - see table 2.2.4	Landward edge of beach or flat	Not used	None

2.2.2 Details for sections that differ from the existing South West Coast Path – Map 2d, Porlock Weir to Worthy

Notes on table:

Column 2 – an asterisk (*) against the route section number means see also table 2.2.3: 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 2.2.4’ 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)
2d	MCM-2-S018	Public bridleway	Tarmac	Yes – see table 2.2.4	Wall	Clarity and cohesion	None
	MCM-2-S019 to MCM-2-S021	Public bridleway	Stone: aggregate	Yes – see table 2.2.4	Wall	Clarity and cohesion	None
	MCM-2-S022	Public bridleway	Stone: aggregate	Yes - normal	Wall	Clarity and cohesion	None
	MCM-2-S023	Public bridleway	Grass	Yes - normal	Wall	Clarity and cohesion	None
	MCM-2-S024	Not an existing walked route	Shingle	Yes - normal	Landward edge of beach or flat	Not used	None

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)
2d	MCM-2-S025	Not an existing walked route	Shingle	Yes - normal	Landward edge of beach or flat	Not used	None
	MCM-2-S026	Not an existing walked route	Bare soil (compacted)	Yes - normal	Path	Clarity and cohesion	None
	MCM-2-S027	Not an existing walked route	Grass	Yes - normal	Path	Clarity and cohesion	None
	MCM-2-S028	Not an existing walked route	Bare soil (compacted)	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None

2.2.3 Other options considered: Map 2c, West Porlock to Porlock Weir

Map(s)	Section number(s)	Option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option as the route
2a	MCM-2-S001	We considered various options in relation to landward extent of margin over existing CROW access land in consultation with the relevant owners and occupiers	We opted for the proposed extent of landward margin because: <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.
2c	MCM-2-S014 to MCM-2-S016	We considered aligning the trail landward of the shingle beach between Porlockford Plantation and the Porlock Weir Road.	We opted for the proposed route because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the shingle beach is passable at most times of the tide and therefore remains an acceptable route for the designated trail; it is closer to the sea and maintains view of the sea; this section would be subject to the roll-back proposals which would allow any future consideration of roll-back to be addressed as the need arises; we concluded that overall the proposed route struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapters 4 and 5 of the Coastal Access Scheme.
2c	MCM-2-S017	We considered aligning the trail along the shingle beach (a continuation along the beach from MCM-2-S016)	We opted for the proposed route because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> it is an existing walked route and is a convenient route for people with reduced mobility; under our proposals, the beach area would remain available for people to use as part of the spreading room; we concluded that overall the proposed route struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapters 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme.

2.2.4 Roll-back implementation – more complex situations: maps 2c and 2d

Map(s)	Section numbers(s)	Feature or site potentially affected	How we will manage roll-back in relation to this feature or site
2c and 2d	MCM-2-S014 to MCM-2-S021	Porlock Weir	If it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of any suitable land (including land classed as excepted land under the Coastal Access Scheme), we will chose a new route on the landward side after detailed discussions with all relevant interests. In reaching this judgement we will have full regard to the need to seek a fair balance between the interests of potentially affected owners and occupiers and those of the public.

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 2.3: Chapter 2 - Formal Proposals

- Below are our formal proposals to the Secretary of State for the length of coast shown on maps 2a to 2d
- They should be read in conjunction with the relevant maps.
- The commentary above explains the practical effect of these proposals.

Formal Proposals – Hurlstone Combe to Worthy

Proposed route of the trail

- 2.3.1 In relation to route sections MCM-2-S001 to MCM-2-S028, the route, as initially determined at the time the report was prepared, is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps 2a to 2d as the proposed route of the trail.
- 2.3.2 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.

Landward boundary of coastal margin

- 2.3.3 Adjacent to route section MCM-2-S001, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with various boundary features, as indicated by the coastal margin landward of the trail on map 2a.
- 2.3.4 Adjacent to route section MCM-2-S002, the landward boundary of the coastal section is to coincide with the fence line shown as the trail on maps 2a.
- 2.3.5 Adjacent to route section MCM-2-S004, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the road shown as the trail on map 2a.
- 2.3.6 Adjacent to route section MCM-2-S005, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the track shown as the trail on map 2a.
- 2.3.7 Adjacent to route sections MCM-2-S006 and MCM-2-S011 to MCM-2-S013, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the hedgerow shown as the trail on map 2a.
- 2.3.8 Adjacent to route sections MCM-2-S008 to MCM-2-S010, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the existing hedgerow, as indicated by the coastal margin landward of the trail on map 2b.
- 2.3.9 Adjacent to route section MCM-2-S018 to MCM-2-S023, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the wall shown as the trail on map 2d.
- 2.3.10 Adjacent to route sections MCM-2-S026 and MCM-2-S027, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the path shown as the trail on map 2d.

Local restrictions and exclusions

- 2.3.11 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

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

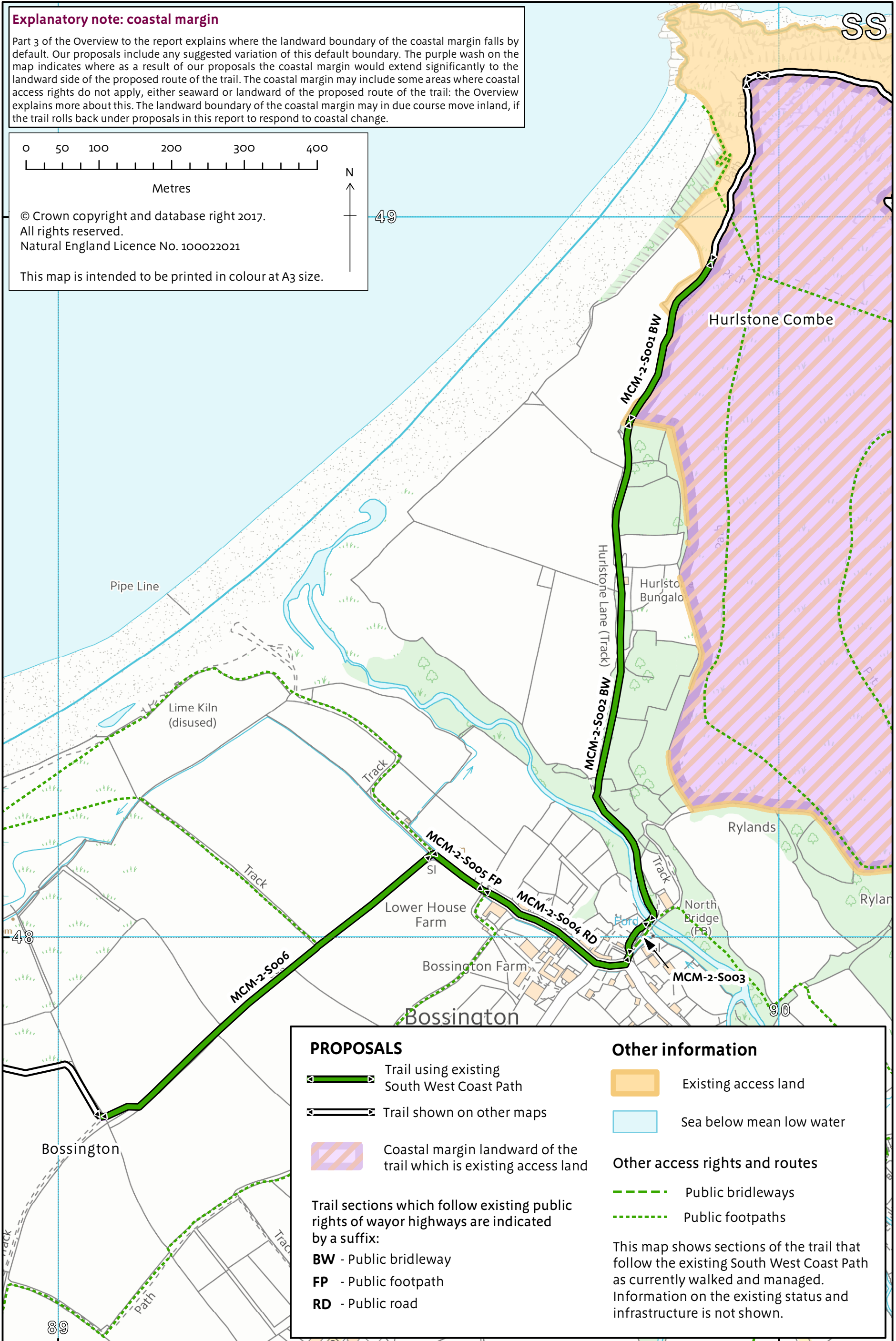
Explanatory note: coastal margin

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.

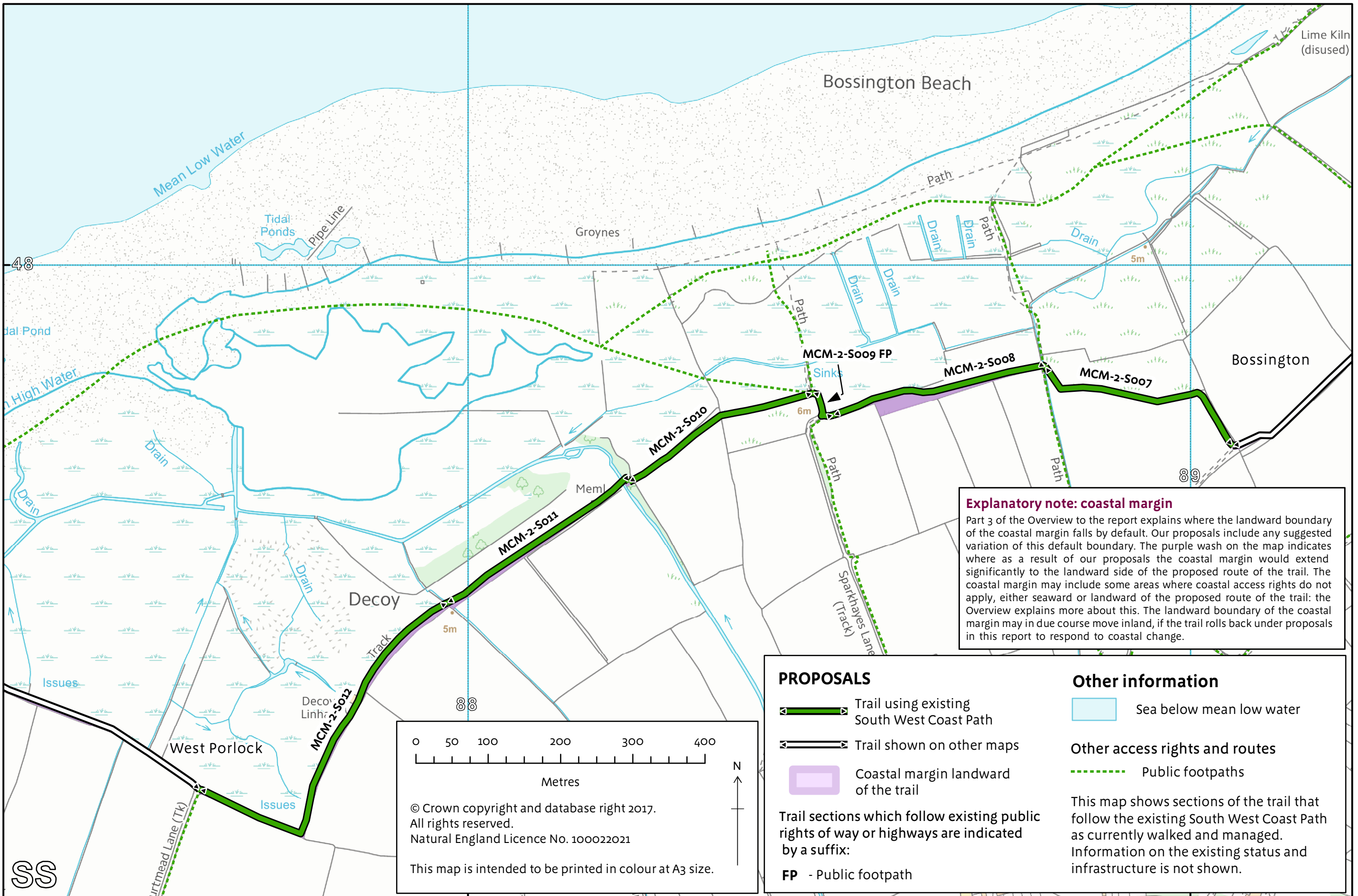
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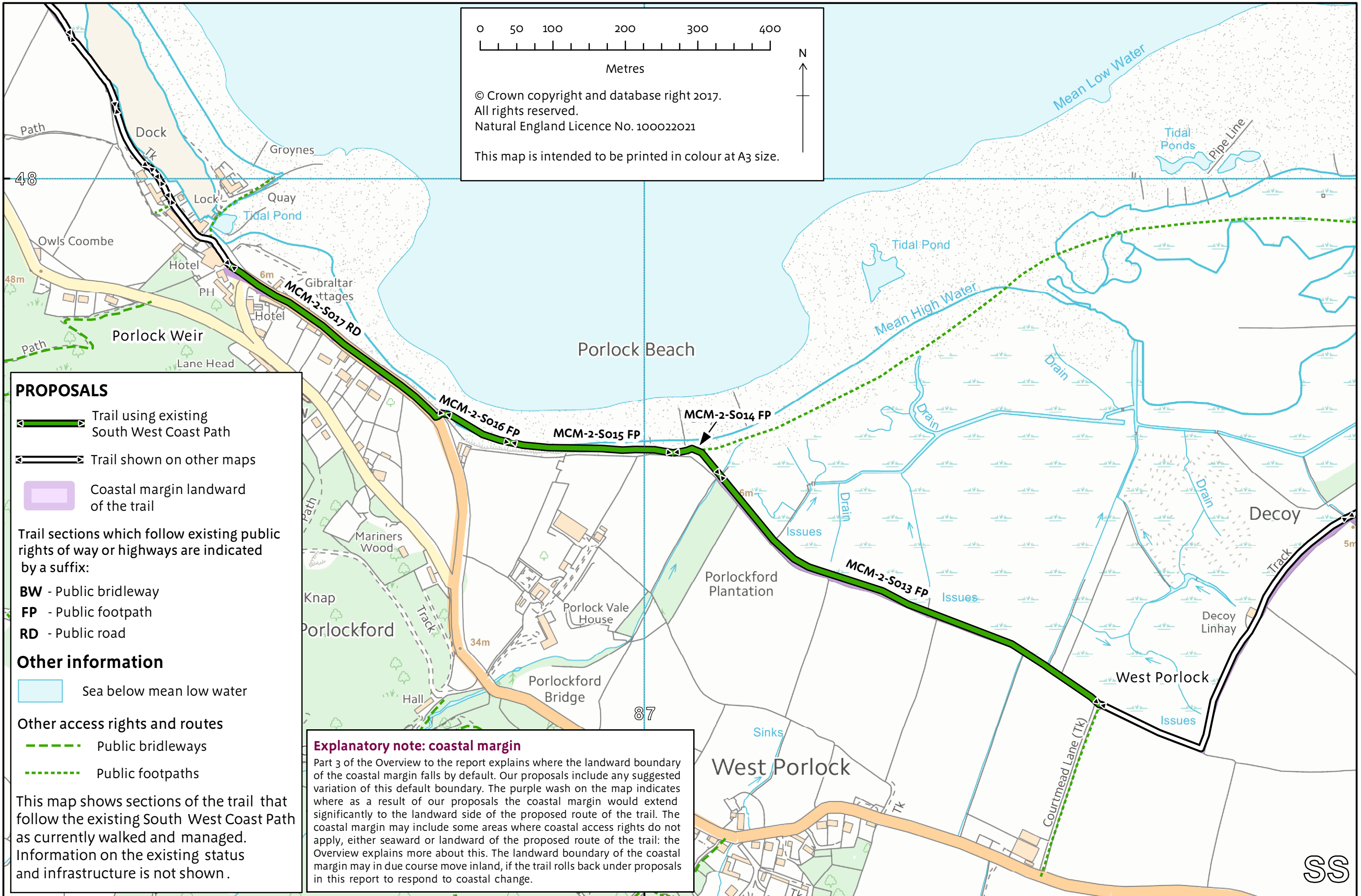
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PROPOSALS		Other information	
	Trail using existing South West Coast Path		Existing access land
	Trail shown on other maps		Sea below mean low water
	Coastal margin landward of the trail which is existing access land	Other access rights and routes	
Trail sections which follow existing public rights of way or highways are indicated by a suffix: BW - Public bridleway FP - Public footpath RD - Public road			Public bridleways
			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.	





PROPOSALS

- Trail using existing South West Coast Path
- 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:

- BW** - Public bridleway
- FP** - Public footpath
- RD** - Public road

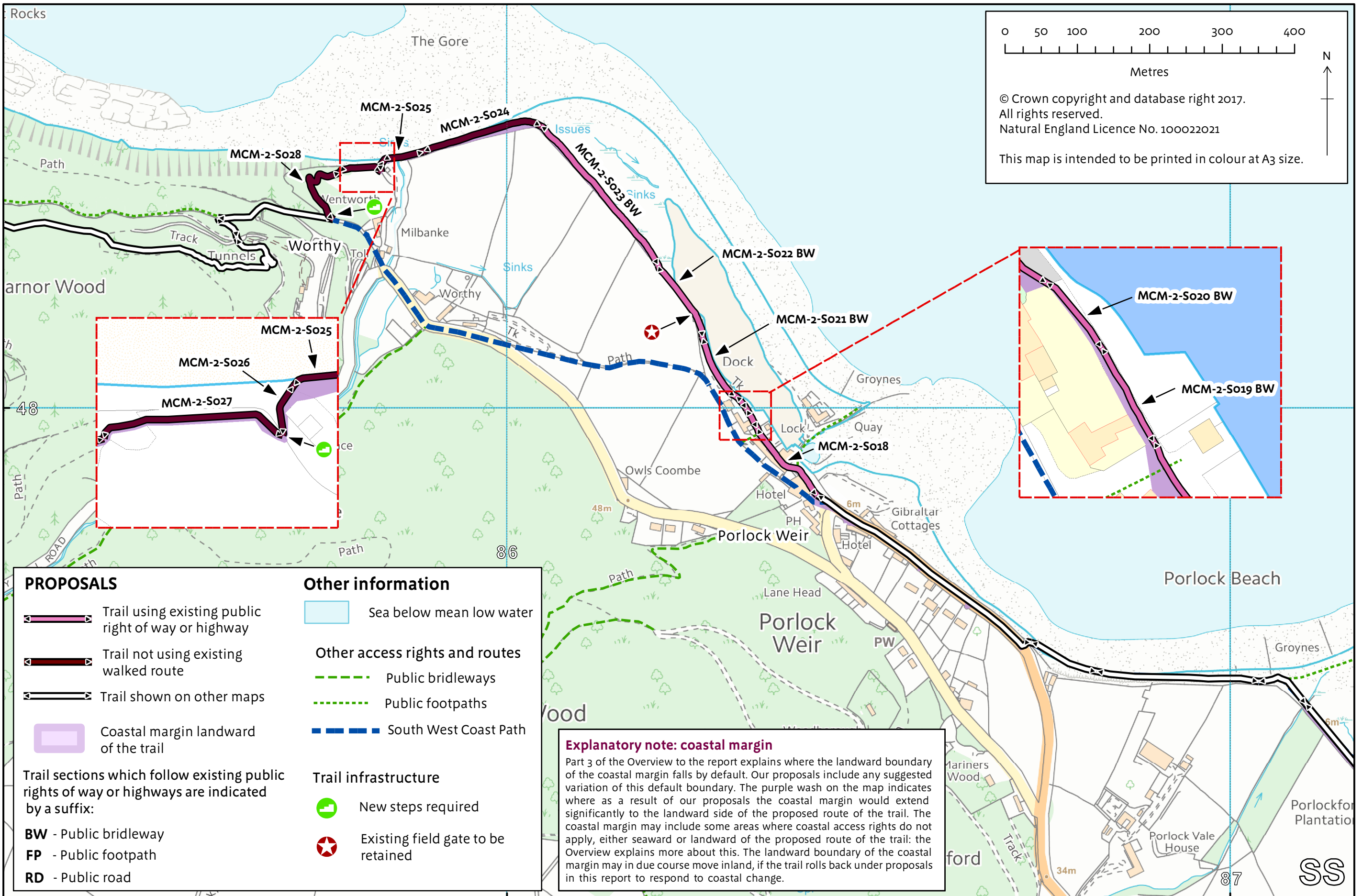
Other information

- Sea below mean low water
- Other access rights and routes**
- Public bridleways
- 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.

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 2d Porlock Weir to Worthy

PROPOSALS

- Trail using existing public right of way or highway
 - Trail not using 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:
- BW** - Public bridleway
 - FP** - Public footpath
 - RD** - Public road

Other information

- Sea below mean low water
- Other access rights and routes**
- Public bridleways
- Public footpaths
- South West Coast Path

Trail infrastructure

- New steps required
- Existing field gate to be retained

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.

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