

Chapter 2:

# Pow Beck, St Bees to Seascale promenade

Coastal Access: Whitehaven to Silecroft - Natural England's Proposals

## Part 2.1: Introduction

<b>Start Point:</b>	<b>Pow Beck, St Bees</b> (grid reference: NX 969 511)
<b>End Point:</b>	<b>Seascale promenade</b> (grid reference: NY 037 009)
<b>Relevant Maps:</b>	<b>2a to 2g</b>

### Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps:

#### The Trail:

- 2.1.1 Generally follows existing walked routes, including public rights of way, south of Braystones. The majority of the route between St Bees and Nethertown does not follow any existing walked route and will require the creation of a new path. See maps 2a to 2g and associated tables below for details.
- 2.1.2 Mainly follows the coastline quite closely and maintains good views of the sea.
- 2.1.3 Is aligned on tracks at the top of the foreshore in the vicinity of Braystones and as far south as High Sellafield.
- 2.1.4 Generally takes a different route to the existing Cumbria Coastal Way as far south as Nethertown/ Braystones, to avoid long sections on a shingle beach. From Braystones southwards to the end of this length, the route is similar to the existing Cumbria Coastal Way.
- 2.1.5 This part of the coast includes the following sites, designated or identified for nature conservation or heritage preservation reasons (See map C of the Overview):
  - St Bees Head Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its geological /wildlife interest
  - Silver Tarn, Hollas & Harnsey mosses Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its biological interest
  - Seascale Foreshore and Dunes County Wildlife Site
  - Braystones County and Local Wildlife Site
  - Starling Castle County and Local Wildlife Site

We have assessed the potential impacts of access along the proposed route (and over the associated spreading room described below) on the features in question and on any which are protected in their own right.

- 2.1.6 The proposed route largely follows popular existing paths in the vicinity of southern St Bees Head and the Seascale Foreshore and Dunes. For this reason, we do not expect the levels and patterns

of public access to change significantly as a result of our proposals. Whilst the Harnsey Moss, Braystones and Starling Castle sites lie fairly close to the proposed route, they are not within the proposed margin. We have therefore concluded that our proposals would not be likely to have any significant impact on these features.

- 2.1.7 In relation to those nature conservation sites listed above, refer to our published Access & Sensitive Feature Appraisal for more information.

**See part 5b of the Overview - 'Natural environment' - for more information.**

### Accessibility

- 2.1.8 Generally, whilst there are few artificial barriers to accessibility on the proposed route, much of this length will not be easily accessible by people with reduced mobility. This is due to undulating terrain with some steeper slopes, steps and sections on sand dunes & shingle. However, the southern part of this length, from Sellafield station to Seascale, follows an existing cycle path and should be readily accessible by all.
- 2.1.9 Between St Bees and Nethertown, and in various other locations, the creation of a new path will involve installation of many stock-proof gates. We envisage this happening as part of the physical establishment work described in part 6 of the Overview. All such items will adhere to National Trail standards.

**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 the Overview.

- 2.1.10 Estuaries: This report proposes that the trail should cross the estuary of the river Calder over the first public crossing point, which is at the mouth of the estuary. (The route of the trail along the open coast also crosses the River Ehen nearby, because there is no viable seaward route along the open coast at this point.) See map 2f.
- 2.1.11 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 2.2.1 below.
- 2.1.12 At Seascale, we have used our discretion to propose the inclusion of additional, more extensive landward areas within the coastal margin, to secure or enhance public enjoyment of this part of the coast. The owner of this land is content for us to propose this. See Table 2.2.1 below and map 2g for more information.

**See 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'.**

- 2.1.13 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.
- 2.1.14 We propose to permanently exclude access to an area of seaward margin adjacent to sections WHS-2-S038 & WHS-2-S039 for reasons of public safety in relation to a motorcycle scramble track on the land. This exclusion will not affect the route itself. See map D in the Overview for details.
- 2.1.15 We propose to give an 'outline direction' to enable exclusion when necessary of access to an area of seaward margin on the spit of land seawards of the river Ehen adjacent to sections WHS-2-S056 to WHS-2-S062, for reasons of land management and public safety in relation to ongoing

operational activities which at times may impact upon this area of land. Such exclusions would not affect the route itself. See map E in the Overview for details.

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

- 2.1.16 Temporary routes: At the time of writing this report, there are no requirements for temporary routes. However, refer to 'Future change' below.
- 2.1.17 Alternative routes: At the time of writing this report, we do not foresee the need for any alternative routes.
- 2.1.18 Establishment: Some physical establishment of the trail would be necessary, in accordance with the general approach described in part 6 the Overview. This would include works to create a new path between St Bees and Nethertown/Braystones, including many new field boundary crossings.
- 2.1.19 Ongoing management: Ongoing management and maintenance would be necessary in accordance with the general approach described in part 7 of the Overview.

**See part 6 - 'Physical establishment of the trail' and part 7 - 'Maintenance of the trail' of the Overview for more information.**

### **Future Change**

- 2.1.20 Parts 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 likely to be affected in the foreseeable future.
- 2.1.21 In the vicinity of the Sellafield nuclear installation and the Moorside development area, we foresee a likely need for changes to the access provisions to allow for exploratory or construction works associated with any development of a new nuclear facility or the operation or decommissioning of the existing facility. Any short to medium term restriction required over the trail would require the provision of a temporary route, whilst any permanent impact on the trail would lead to the proposal of a new route in the future by means of a variation report. This is further explained at part 8 of the Overview.

**See part 5e - 'Coastal processes' and part 8 - 'Future changes' of the Overview for more information.**

## Part 2.2: Commentary on Maps

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

#### 2.2.1 Section Details – Maps 2a to 2g: Pow Beck, St Bees to Seascale promenade

Notes on table:

Column 2 – an asterisk (\*) against the route section number means see also table 2.2.2: 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 2.2.3’ 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)
2a	WHS-2-S001*	Public Footpath	Gravel	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-2-S002*	Public Footpath	Concrete	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-2-S003*	Public Footpath	Concrete	No	Landward edge of road	Clarity & Cohesion	None
	WHS-2-S004*	Public Footpath	Grass	No	Wall	Clarity & Cohesion	None
	WHS-2-S005* to WHS-2-S008*	Not an existing walked route	Grass	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-2-S009*	Not an existing walked route	Grass	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-2-S010* & WHS-2-S011*	Not an existing walked route	Grass	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
2b	WHS-2-S012* to WHS-2-S015*	Not an existing walked route	Grass	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-2-S016*	Not an existing walked route	Bare Soil (compacted)	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-2-S017*	Public Highway	Gravel	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-2-S018* to WHS-2-S024*	Not an existing walked route	Grass	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-2-S025* to WHS-2-S027	Other existing walked route	Gravel	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-2-S028	Other existing walked route	Gravel	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
2c	WHS-2-S029	Public Footpath	Grass	No	Fence	Clarity & Cohesion	None
	WHS-2-S030 & WHS-2-S031	Other existing walked route	Grass	No	Fence	Clarity & Cohesion	None
	WHS-2-S032	Public Footpath	Grass	No	Fence	Clarity & Cohesion	None
	WHS-2-S033	Public Footpath	Bare Soil (compacted)	No	Fence	Clarity & Cohesion	None
	WHS-2-S034	Public Footpath	Grass	No	Fence	Clarity & Cohesion	None
	WHS-2-S035	Public Footpath	Gravel	No	Fence	Clarity & Cohesion	None
	WHS-2-S036	Public Footpath	Tarmac	No	Fence	Clarity & Cohesion	None
	WHS-2-S037*	Public Highway	Tarmac	No	Landward edge of road	Clarity & Cohesion	None
	WHS-2-S038*	Not an existing walked route	Grass	No	Wall/hedge	Clarity & Cohesion	Margin
	WHS-2-S039*	Not an existing walked route	Grass	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	WHS-2-S040* & WHS-2-S041*	Not an existing walked route	Grass	Yes – Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
WHS-2-S042*	Not an existing walked route	Gravel	Yes – See table 2.2.3	Landward edge of trail	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	WHS-2-S043	Other existing walked route	Gravel	Yes – See table 2.2.3	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-2-S044	Other existing walked route	Sand	Yes – See table 2.2.3	Fence	Clarity & Cohesion	None
2e	WHS-2-S045	Other existing walked route	Gravel	Yes – See table 2.2.3	Fence	Clarity & Cohesion	None
	WHS-2-S046	Other existing walked route	Sand	Yes – See table 2.2.3	Fence	Clarity & Cohesion	None
	WHS-2-S047	Other existing walked route	Grass	Yes – See table 2.2.3	Fence	Clarity & Cohesion	None
	WHS-2-S048	Other existing walked route	Sand	Yes – See table 2.2.3	Fence	Clarity & Cohesion	None
	WHS-2-S049	Other existing walked route	Grass	Yes – See table 2.2.3	Fence	Clarity & Cohesion	None
	WHS-2-S050	Other existing walked route	Bare Soil (compacted)	Yes – See table 2.2.3	Wall	Clarity & cohesion	None
	WHS-2-S051	Other existing walked route	Grass	Yes – See table 2.2.3	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-2-S052	Other existing walked route	Steps: Timber	Yes – See table 2.2.3	Fence	Clarity & Cohesion	None
	WHS-2-S053	Other existing walked route	Gravel	Yes – See table 2.2.3	Landward edge of bridge	Clarity & Cohesion	None
	WHS-2-S054	Other existing walked route	Steps: Timber	Yes – See table 2.2.3	Fence	Clarity & Cohesion	None
	WHS-2-S055	Other existing walked route	Grass	No	Fence	Clarity & cohesion	None
	WHS-2-S056	Not an existing walked route	Grass	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	2f	WHS-2-S057 & WHS-2-S058	Not an existing walked route	Grass	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used
WHS-2-S059		Not an existing walked route	Grass	No	Fence	Clarity & Cohesion	Margin
WHS-2-S060		Public footway (pavement)	Tarmac	No	Fence	Clarity & Cohesion	Margin
WHS-2-S061		Road	Tarmac	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
WHS-2-S062		Cycleway	Tarmac	No	Fence	Clarity & Cohesion	Margin
WHS-2-S063		Cycleway (bridge)	Tarmac	No	Fence/Landward edge of bridge	Clarity & cohesion	None
WHS-2-S064		Cycleway	Bare Soil (compacted)	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
WHS-2-S065		Cycleway	Bare Soil (compacted)	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
WHS-2-S066		Cycleway	Tarmac/ gravel	No	Landward edge of cycle path	Clarity & Cohesion	None
2g	WHS-2-S067	Cycleway	Tarmac/ gravel	No	Landward edge of cycle path	Clarity & Cohesion	None
	WHS-2-S068	Cycleway	Gravel	No	Landward edge of cycle path	Clarity & Cohesion	None
	WHS-2-S069	Other existing walked route	Concrete	No	Landward edge of trail	No proposal	None
	WHS-2-S070	Other existing walked route	Tarmac	No	Various	Additional landward area	None

## 2.2.2 Other options considered: Maps 2a to 2c: St Bees to Braystones

Map(s)	Section number(s)	Option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option as the route
2a & 2b	WHS-2-S001 to WHS-2-S026	We considered aligning the trail along the foreshore.	The trail will not normally be aligned on shingle beaches because it can be difficult to walk on for any distance and may be partly covered by tides. We would only propose a route along shingle for a short distance where there are no other viable route options.
2c	WHS-2-S037 to WHS-2-S042	We considered aligning the trail along the road from Nethertown that leads over the railway line and onto a short section of access track and then onto the foreshore.	The trail will not normally be aligned on shingle beaches because it can be difficult to walk on for any distance and may be partly covered by tides. We would only propose a route along shingle for a short distance where there are no other viable route options.

## 2.2.3 Roll-back implementation – more complex situations: Map 2c to 2e: Nethertown to High Sellafield

Map(s)	Section number(s)	Feature or site potentially affected	How we will manage roll-back in relation to this feature or site
2c to 2e	WHS-2-S042 to WHS-2-S054	Beach front properties and coastal railway.	If it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of the specified excepted land (including buildings, curtilage, gardens, railway etc), we will choose a route landward of it, following discussions with owners and occupiers. Adjoining sections, for which roll-back is also proposed, may well need to change in order to retain the continuity of the trail.

Note: 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 2g.
- They should be read in conjunction with the relevant maps.
- The commentary above explains the practical effect of these proposals.

### Formal Proposals – Pow Beck, St Bees to Seascale promenade

#### Discretion to include an estuary

- 2.3.1 Natural England proposes to exercise its functions, so far as may be necessary in the circumstances, as if the sea included the estuarial waters of the river Calder as far as the first bridge with public access, as indicated by the extent of the trail shown on maps 2e & 2f.

#### Proposed route of the trail

- 2.3.2 In relation to route sections WHS-2-S002 to WHS-2-S004, WHS-2-S0025 to WHS-2-S039 and WHS-2-S056 to WHS-2-S070, the route is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps 2a to 2g as the proposed route of the trail.
- 2.3.3 In relation to route sections WHS-2-S001, WHS-2-S005 to WHS-2-S024, and WHS-2-S040 to WHS-2-S054 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 2e as the proposed route of the trail.
- 2.3.4 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

- 2.3.5 Adjacent to route sections WHS-2-S003 and WHS-2-S037, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the road shown as the trail, as shown on maps 2a & 2c.
- 2.3.6 Adjacent to route section WHS-2-S004 the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the existing boundary wall landward of the trail, as shown on map 2a.
- 2.3.7 Adjacent to route sections WHS-2-S029 to WHS-2-S036, WHS-2-S055, WHS-2-S059, WHS-2-S060 and WHS-2-S062, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the existing boundary fence landward of the trail, as shown on maps 2c, 2e & 2f.
- 2.3.8 Adjacent to route sections WHS-2-S038 and WHS-2-S050, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the existing boundary wall which, at the time of writing this report, is landward of the trail, as shown on maps 2c & 2e.
- 2.3.9 Adjacent to route sections WHS-2-S044 to WHS-2-S049, WHS-2-S052 and WHS-2-S054 the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the existing boundary fence which, at the time of writing this report, is landward of the trail, as shown on maps 2d & 2e.

- 2.3.10 Adjacent to route section WHS-2-S053, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the bridge which, at the time of writing this report, is landward of the trail, as shown on map 2e.
- 2.3.11 Adjacent to route section WHS-2-S063 the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the existing fence and the landward edge of the bridge, both of which are landward of the trail, as shown on map 2f.
- 2.3.12 Adjacent to route sections WHS-2-S066 to WHS-2-S068, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the cycle path shown as the trail on maps 2f & 2g.
- 2.3.13 Adjacent to route section WHS-2-S070, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with seaward edge of the roads and car park, as indicated by the coastal margin landward of the trail on map 2g.

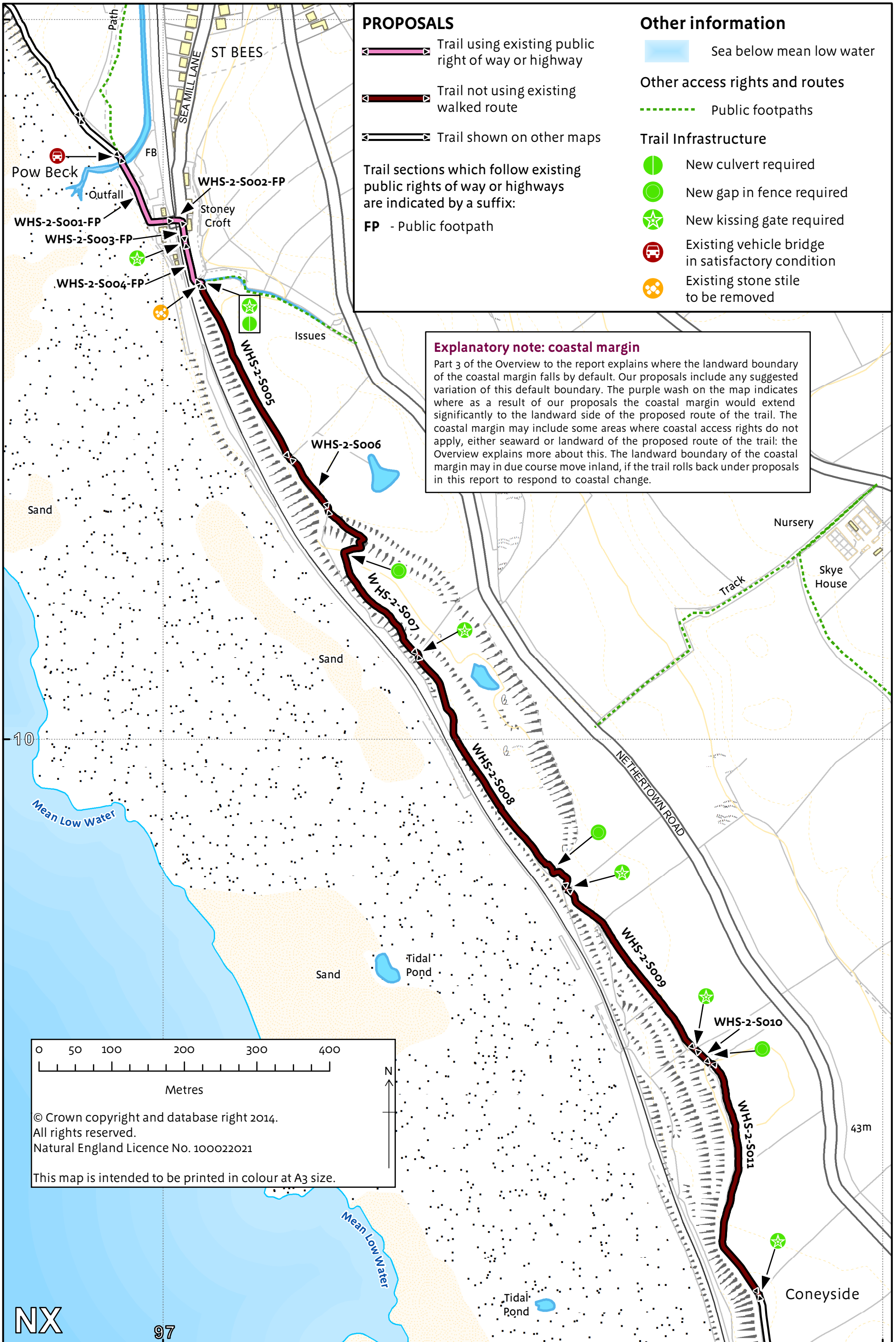
### **Local restrictions and exclusions**

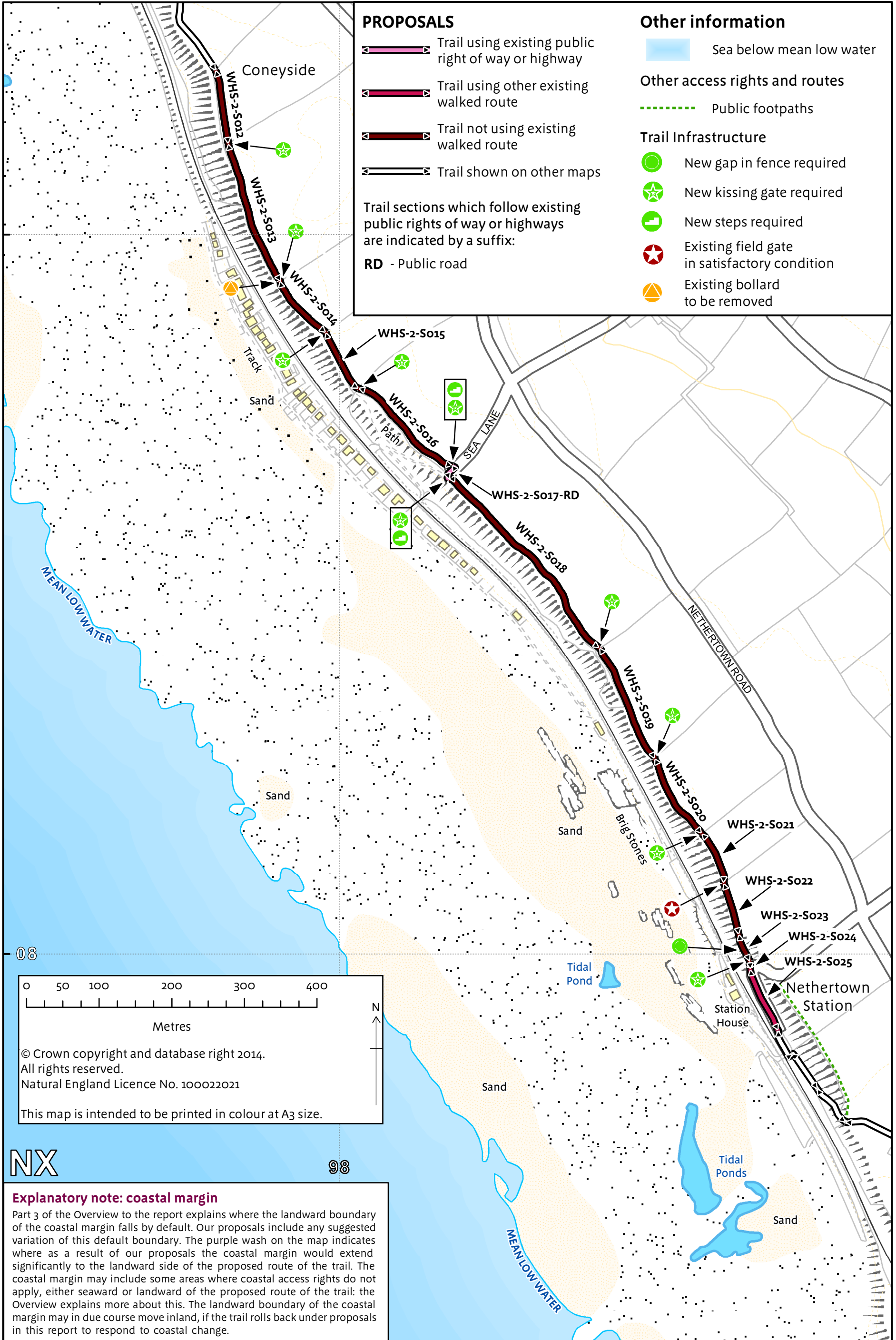
- 2.3.14 Natural England proposes to restrict or exclude access relevant to this length of coast, as follows:
- Access to the parts of the margin seawards of sections WHS-2-S038 & WHS-2-S039 is to be excluded permanently for reasons of public safety in relation to a motorcycle scramble track on the land. (See map D in the Overview).
  - Access to parts of the margin on the spit of land seaward of the river Ehen is to be excluded from time to time, as required, for reasons of land management and public safety in connection with operations undertaken by the nuclear management authorities. This exclusion will not affect the route itself. (See Map E in the Overview).

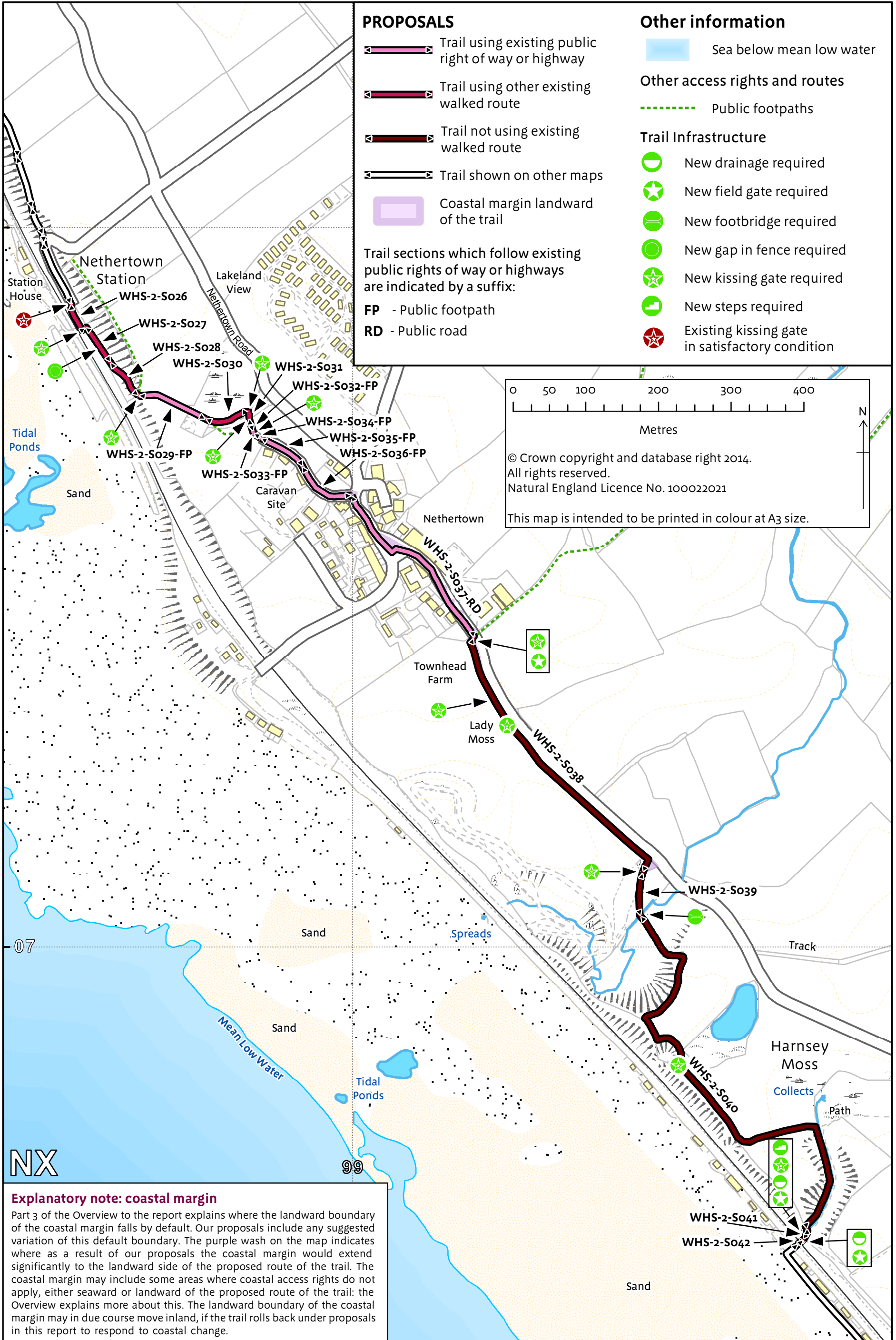
### **Alternative routes**

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



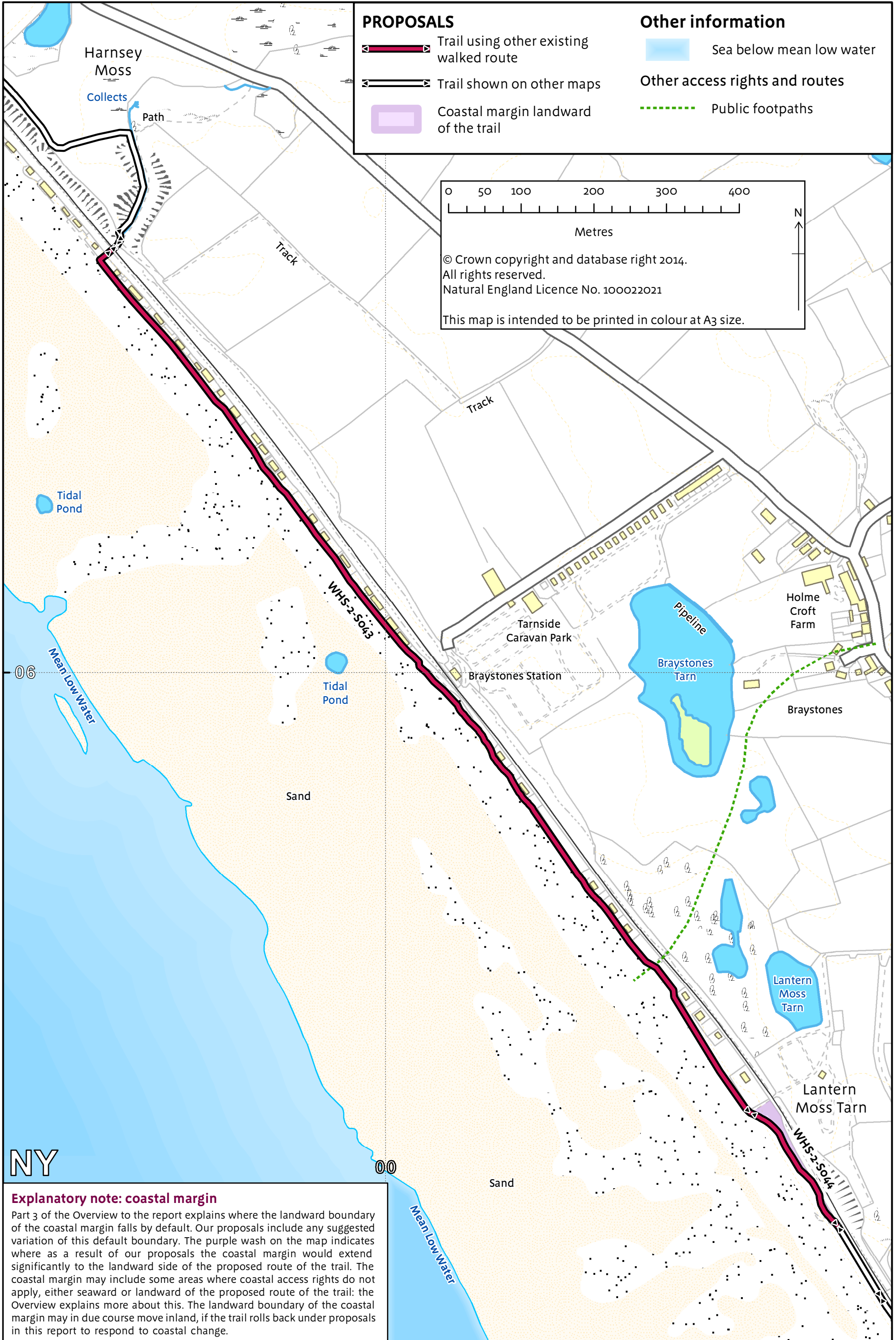


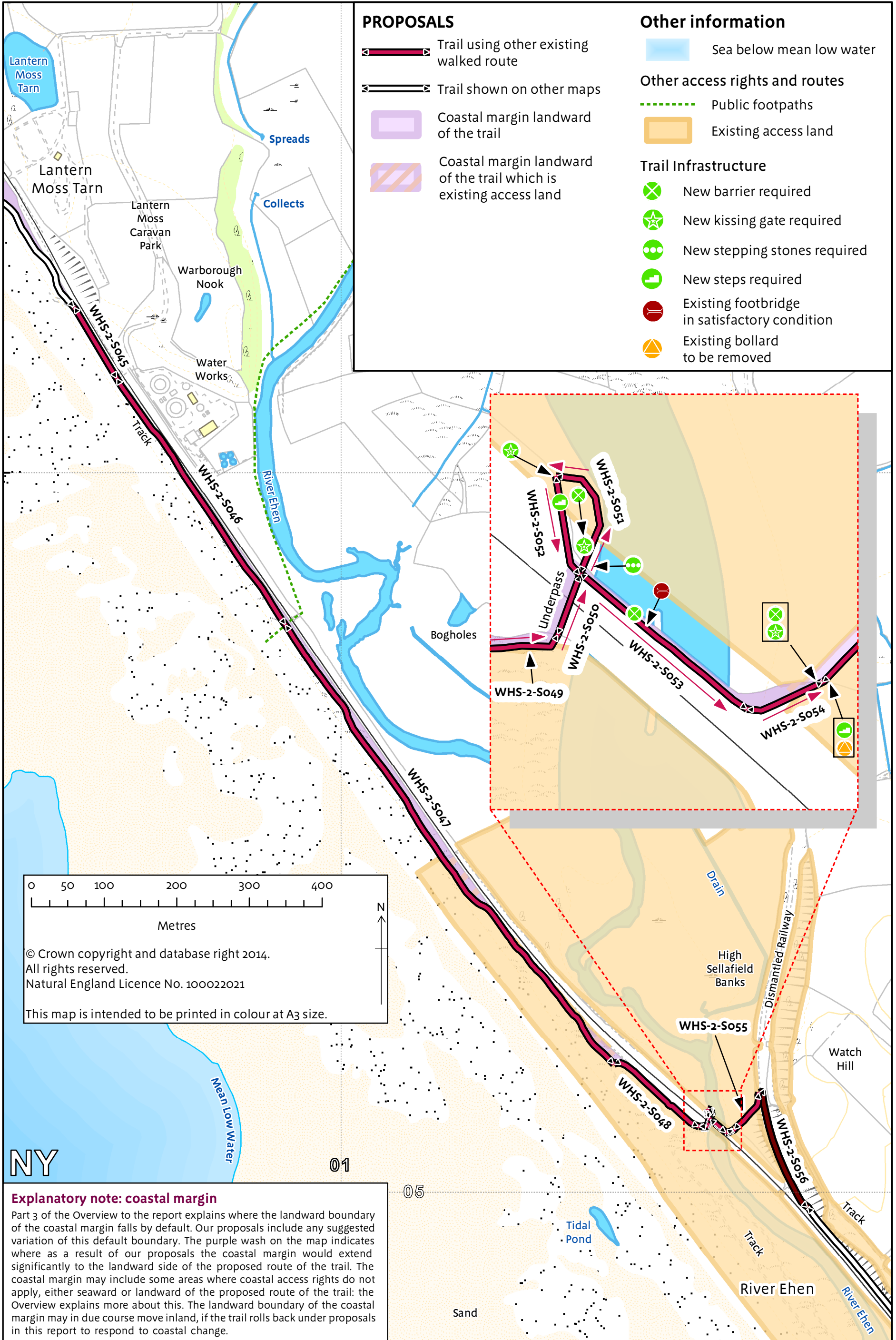




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**Explanatory note: coastal margin**  
 Part 3 of the Overview to the report explains where the landward boundary of the coastal margin falls by default. Our proposals include any suggested variation of this default boundary. The purple wash on the 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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