

Chapter 4:

Eskmeals to Silecroft beach car park

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

Part 4.1: Introduction

Start Point:	Eskmeals (grid reference: SD 087 942)
End Point:	Silecroft beach car park (grid reference: SD 121 811)
Relevant Maps:	4a to 4i

Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps:

The Trail:

- 4.1.1 Begins at a point on the minor road south of the river Esk, adjacent to the railway viaduct. Whilst we have proposed a route across the river Esk in this location, that part of our proposals will not be available for public use until such time as a new bridge is installed (see Overview and Chapter 3 for more information).
- 4.1.2 Generally follows existing walked routes, including public rights of way and minor roads, along much of this length, where they exist and are suitable.
- 4.1.3 Mainly follows the coastline quite closely and maintains good views of the sea, with the exception of the vicinity of the Eskmeals firing range, where it passes to the landward side of the range.
- 4.1.4 Includes 33 sections of new path, between Stubb place and Selker, and between Gutterby and Silecroft. See maps 4c to 4i and associated tables below for details.
- 4.1.5 Follows a route similar to the existing Cumbria Coastal Way over the northern parts of the length covered by this chapter, but departs from this from Gutterby southwards, where it follows a new route on higher ground, instead of along the foreshore.
- 4.1.6 This part of the coast includes the following sites, designated for nature conservation or heritage preservation (See map C of the Overview):
 - Drigg Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
 - Drigg Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its biological interest
 - Eskmeals Dunes Nature Reserve
 - Eskmeals County and Local Wildlife site
 - Annaside Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its biological interest
 - Annaside & Gutterby Banks Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its geological interest

- Summer Hill County and Local Wildlife Site

- Shaw Meadow and Sea Pasture Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its biological interest

This stretch of coast also contains several important areas for the natterjack toad. All of these specific sites have been covered by our access and sensitive features appraisal.

- 4.1.7 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. After advice from specialists we have concluded that our proposals would not be likely to have any significant impact on features at these sites.
- 4.1.8 Parts of the Drigg Coast SAC and SSSI and Eskmeals County and Local Wildlife sites lie within the default coastal margin. These areas are all located within the Eskmeals Firing Range site and as such are covered by existing byelaws which mean they are excepted from coastal access rights.
- 4.1.9 Whilst the proposed route of the trail passes through the Annaside SSSI, it will follow an existing public footpath. Consequently, we do not expect the existing levels and patterns of use to change significantly in this location.
- 4.1.10 At the Annaside and Gutterby Banks SSSI, the proposed route of the trail (which includes both a public right of way and new access) is mainly located close to the landward side of the SSSI boundary at the top of the coastal bank/slope. Although the site is therefore within the default coastal margin, the topography of the terrain (steep and undulating) leads us to expect that no new patterns of access will develop over these areas.
- 4.1.11 At the Summer Hill County and Local Wildlife Site, the proposed route of the trail will pass through the site along the top of the coastal slope on its seaward side. There is currently no existing access through the site so the level and pattern of access in this area will change. However, we predict that most people will avoid the steeper ground and will tend to walk along the line of the coastal path or along the foreshore.
- 4.1.12 The Shaw Meadows and Sea Pastures SSSI site lies fairly close to the end of the proposed route near Silecroft car park. However, they are not within the proposed margin and we have therefore concluded that our proposals would not be likely to have any significant impact on these sites.
- 4.1.13 In reaching these conclusions we have identified that it would be beneficial to provide additional information signs at key locations along this stretch of coast (for example at nearby car parks at Silecroft & Stubb Place, and at entrances to any key sites), to encourage walkers to stay on the path and to remind dog owners to prevent dogs from disturbing wildlife. Following discussions with the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust (ARC), we also propose to install new enclosure fencing on land just to the south of Hyton Marsh (part of the Annaside SSSI), to protect important natterjack toad breeding pools. A further length of 'guide' fencing will be installed just to the north of Silecroft car park to encourage people to remain on the route and away from other important natterjack toad breeding pools.
- 4.1.14 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

- 4.1.15 Generally, there are few artificial barriers to accessibility on the proposed route, which makes use of existing surface paths wherever these meet the criteria in the Coastal Access Scheme. However, there are places where it may not be entirely suitable for people with reduced mobility because:
- The trail would follow an uneven grass or bare soil path in many places; and

- It will be necessary to cross steeper ground, sometimes by means of steps.

4.1.16 Wherever possible, existing stiles will be replaced with kissing gates, so as to make them easier to use. 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

The discretions referred to below are explained in more detail in the Overview.

4.1.17 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 4.2.1 below.

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'.

4.1.18 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.

4.1.19 At the time of writing this report, we do not foresee the need for any other restrictions or exclusions in relation to the length of coast covered by this chapter. Any future requirement may result in a temporary or alternative route.

4.1.20 Temporary routes: At the time of writing this report, we do not foresee the need for any temporary routes in relation to the length of coast covered by this chapter.

4.1.21 Alternative routes: At the time of writing this report, we do not foresee the need for any alternative routes in relation to the length of coast covered by this chapter.

4.1.22 Other factors affecting access: At route section WHS-4-S001, in the vicinity of Eskmeals firing range, public access may be interrupted from time to time, for short periods, to allow firing to take place safely, in accordance with military byelaws. No suitable alternative route has been identified and, during the affected periods, the coastal margin would also be unavailable for public access. Walkers will be requested to wait for a short period before continuing their journey. The proposal is to manage these measures without any requirement for any additional direction to exclude access under CROW.

4.1.23 Establishment: Some physical establishment of the trail would be necessary, in accordance with the general approach described in part 6 the Overview. In particular, it will be necessary to construct steps over steeper ground near the northern end of Hyton Marsh (Section WHS-4-S020 – see map 4d) and just south of Summer Hill (Section WHS-4-S051 – see map 4h).

4.1.24 Ongoing management: 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

- 4.1.25 Much of the route of the trail on this length of coast would be able to change without further approval from the Secretary of State in response to coastal erosion or other geomorphological processes, or encroachment by the sea. This would happen in accordance with the criteria and procedures for 'roll back' set out in part 8 of the Overview. See tables 4.2.1 & 4.2.3 below for details of the sections likely to be affected.
- 4.1.26 We are aware of proposals to re-develop the beach car park and introduce new facilities at Silecroft. However, we do not believe that this will significantly affect the proposed route of the trail. 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 4.2: Commentary on Maps

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

4.2.1 Section Details – Maps 4a to 4i: Eskmeals to Silecroft beach car park

Notes on table:

Column 2 – an asterisk (*) against the route section number means see also table 4.2.2: 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 4.2.3’ 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)
4a, 4b, 4c	WHS-4-S001*	Public Highway	Tarmac	Yes - normal	Various	Clarity and Cohesion	None
4c	WHS-4-S002 & WHS-4-S003	Not an existing walked route	Grass	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	No Proposal	None
	WHS-4-S004* & WHS-4-S005*	Not an existing walked route	Grass	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	No Proposal	None
	WHS-4-S006* to WHS-4-S009*	Not an existing walked route	Grass	Yes – see table 4.2.3	Landward edge of trail	No Proposal	None
	WHS-4-S010*	Not an existing walked route	Grass	Yes – see table 4.2.3	Fence line	Clarity and Cohesion	None
4d	WHS-4-S011* & WHS-4-S012*	Not an existing walked route	Grass	Yes – see table 4.2.3	Landward edge of trail	No Proposal	None
	WHS-4-S013*	Public Footpath	Gravel	Yes – see table 4.2.3	Landward edge of track	Clarity and Cohesion	None
	WHS-4-S014* & WHS-4-S015*	Other existing walked route	Gravel	Yes – see table 4.2.3	Landward edge of track	Clarity and Cohesion	None
	WHS-4-S016*	Public Footpath	Grass	Yes – see table 4.2.3	Landward edge of trail	No Proposal	None
	WHS-4-S017	Other existing walked route	Grass	Yes - normal	Fence line	Clarity and Cohesion	None
	WHS-4-S018	Other existing walked route	Grass	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	No Proposal	None
	WHS-4-S019	Not an existing walked route	Grass	Yes - normal	Fence line	Clarity and Cohesion	None
	WHS-4-S020	Not an existing walked route	Grass	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	No Proposal	None
4e	WHS-4-S021	Public Footpath	Grass	Yes - normal	Fence line	Clarity and Cohesion	None
	WHS-4-S022	Public Footpath	Boardwalk or raised walkway	Yes - normal	Landward edge of bridge	Clarity and Cohesion	None
	WHS-4-S023 & WHS-4-S024	Public Footpath	Grass	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	No Proposal	None
	WHS-4-S025 & WHS-4-S026	Public Footpath	Gravel	Yes - normal	Fence line	Clarity and Cohesion	None
	WHS-4-S027	Public Footpath	Gravel	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	No Proposal	None
	WHS-4-S028 & WHS-4-S029	Not an existing walked route	Grass	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	No Proposal	None
4f	WHS-4-S030	Not an existing walked route	Grass	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	No Proposal	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)
4f	WHS-4-S031 to WHS-4-S034	Public Footpath	Gravel	Yes - normal	Fence line	Clarity and Cohesion	None
	WHS-4-S035	Other existing walked route	Grass	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	No Proposal	None
	WHS-4-S036 & WHS-4-S037	Public Footpath	Grass	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	No Proposal	None
4g	WHS-4-S038* to WHS-4-S043*	Not an existing walked route	Grass	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	No Proposal	None
	WHS-4-S044*	Not an existing walked route	Grass	Yes - normal	Fence line	Clarity and Cohesion	None
	WHS-4-S045*	Not an existing walked route	Grass	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	No Proposal	None
4h	WHS-4-S046* to WHS-4-S048*	Not an existing walked route	Grass	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	No Proposal	None
	WHS-4-S049* to WHS-4-S052*	Not an existing walked route	Grass	Yes – see table 4.2.3	Fence line	Clarity and Cohesion	None
	WHS-4-S053* & WHS-4-S054*	Not an existing walked route	Grass	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	No Proposal	None
4i	WHS-4-S055* to WHS-4-S057*	Not an existing walked route	Grass	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	No Proposal	None
	WHS-4-S058*	Other existing walked route	Gravel	Yes - normal	Wall	Clarity and Cohesion	None
	WHS-4-S059	Other existing walked route	Gravel	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	No Proposal	None

4.2.2 Other options considered: Maps 4a to 4i: Eskmeals to Silecroft beach car park

Map(s)	Section number(s)	Option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option as the route
4a	WHS-4-S001	We considered aligning the route through Eskmeals Dunes nature reserve and along the foreshore, seaward of the Eskmeals firing range.	We opted for the proposed route because this seaward alignment option for the route would be affected by access exclusions under the military byelaws.
4c to 4i	WHS-4-S004 to WHS-4-S016 & WHS-4-S038 to WHS-4-S058	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.

4.2.3 Roll-back implementation – more complex situations: Maps 4a to 4i: Eskmeals to Silecroft beach car park

Map(s)	Section number(s)	Feature(s) or site(s) potentially affected	How we will manage roll-back in relation to this feature or site
4c & 4d	WHS-4-S006 to WHS-4-S016	Houses, farm buildings, gardens.	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.
4h	WHS-4-S049 to WHS-4-S052	House and garden.	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.

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 4.3: Chapter 4 - Formal Proposals

- Below are our formal proposals to the Secretary of State for the length of coast shown on maps 4a to 4i.
- They should be read in conjunction with the relevant maps.
- The commentary above explains the practical effect of these proposals.

Formal Proposals – Eskmeals to Silecroft beach car park

Proposed route of the trail

- 4.3.1 In relation to route sections WHS-4-S001 to WHS-4-S059, the route, as initially determined at the time the report was prepared, is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps 4a to 4i as the proposed route of the trail.
- 4.3.2 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

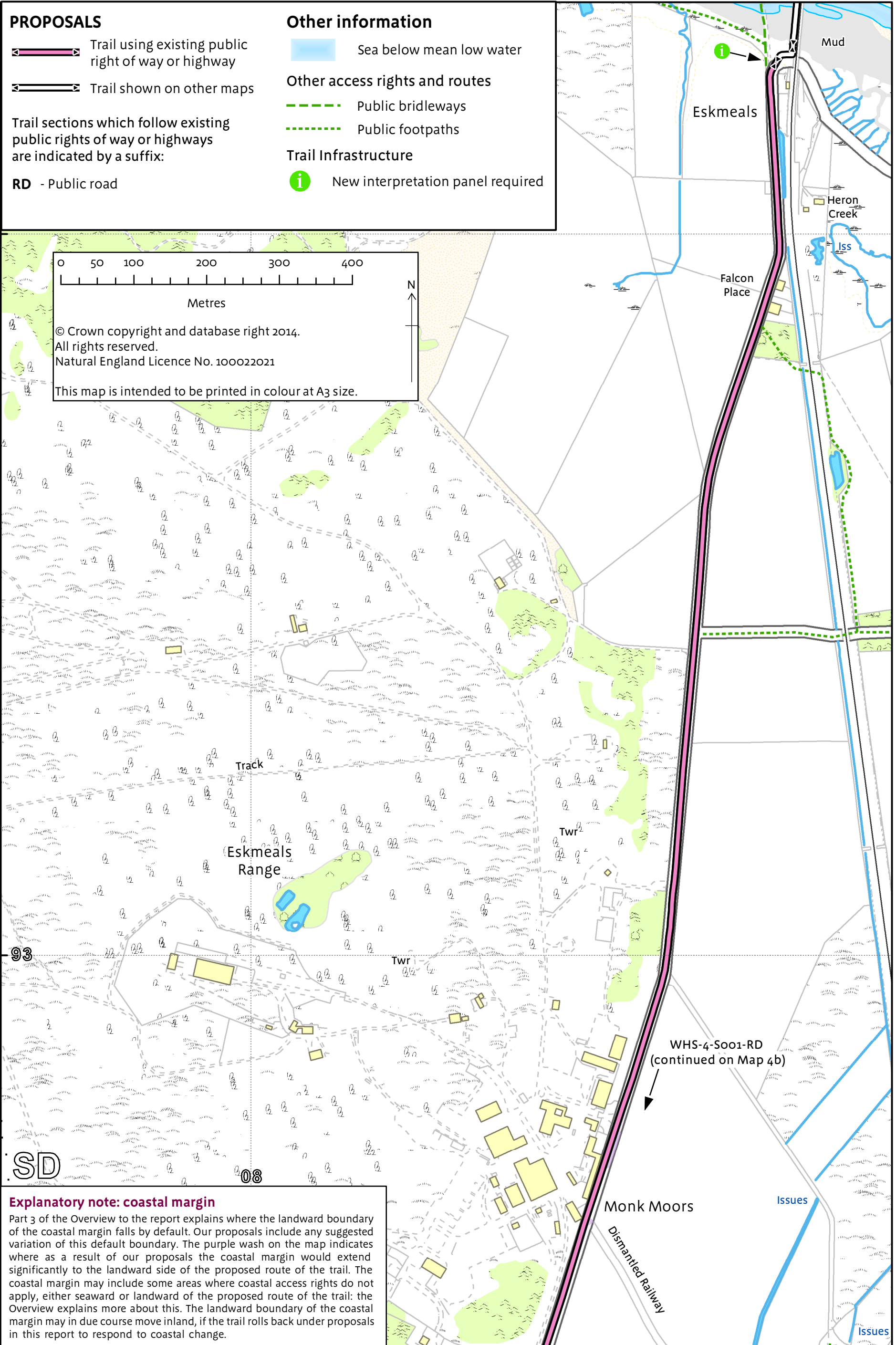
- 4.3.3 Adjacent to route sections WHS-4-S001, WHS-4-S010, WHS-4-S017, WHS-4-S019, WHS-4-S021, WHS-4-S025, WHS-4-S026, WHS-4-S031 to WHS-4-S034, WHS-4-S044, WHS-4-S049 to WHS-4-S052 and WHS-4-S058, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the fence or wall which, at the time of writing this report, is landward of the road, track or path shown as the trail on maps 4a to 4i.
- 4.3.4 Adjacent to route sections WHS-4-S013 to WHS-4-S015, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the track which, at the time of writing this report, is shown as the trail on map 4d.
- 4.3.5 Adjacent to route section WHS-4-S022, 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 road, track or path shown as the trail on map 4e.

Local restrictions and exclusions

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

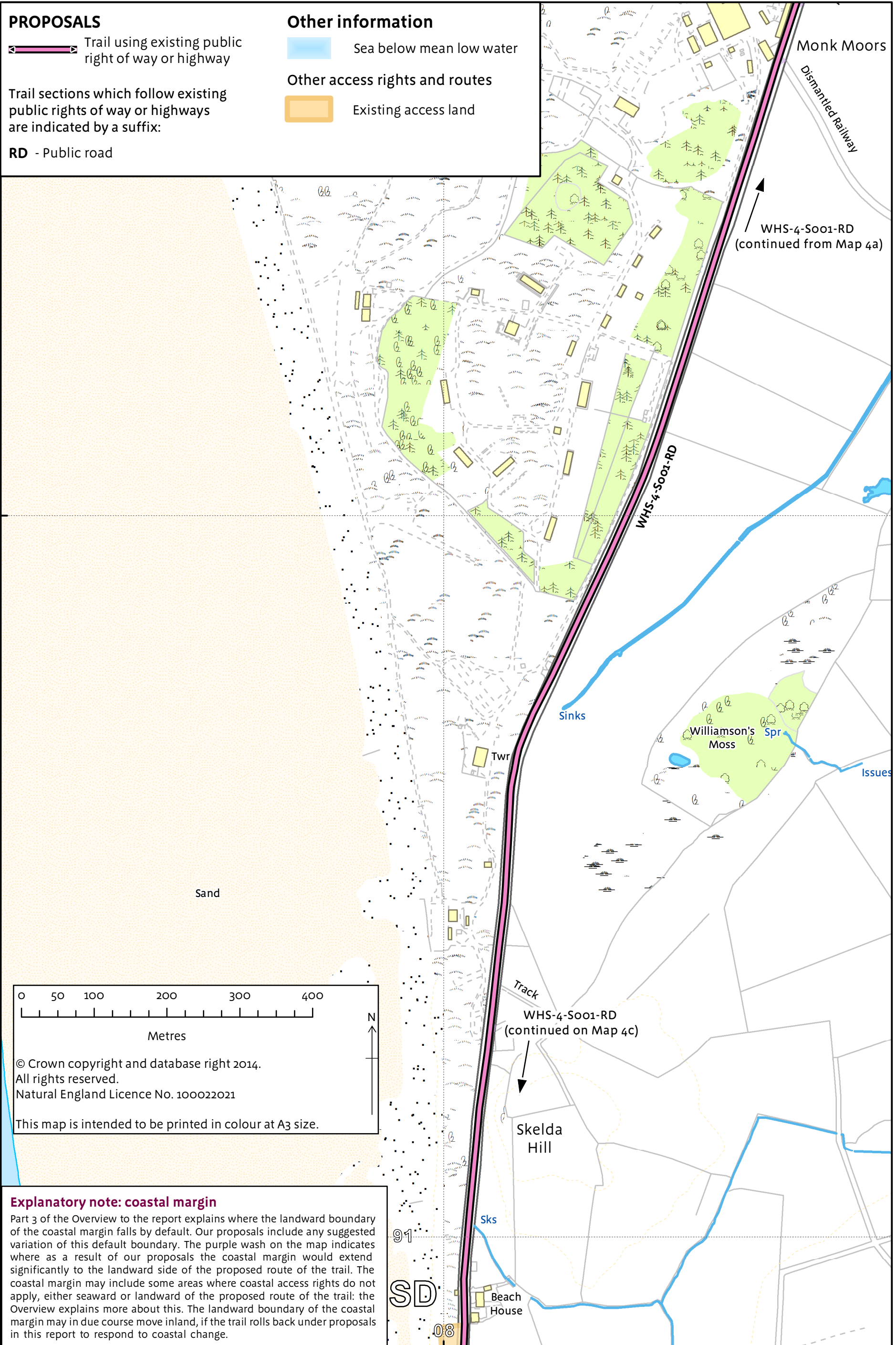
Alternative routes

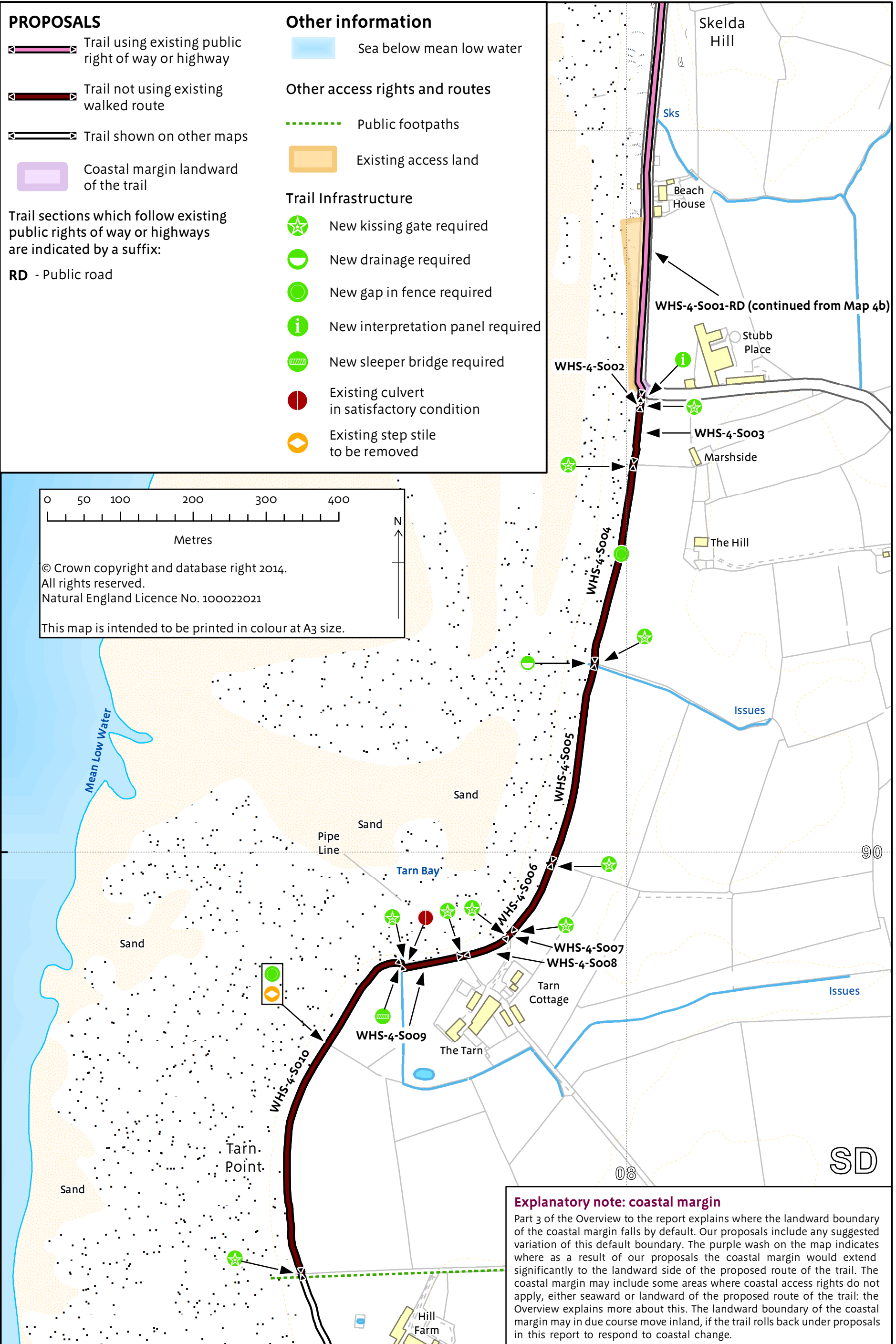
- 4.3.7 There are no proposals for alternative routes in relation to this length of coast.

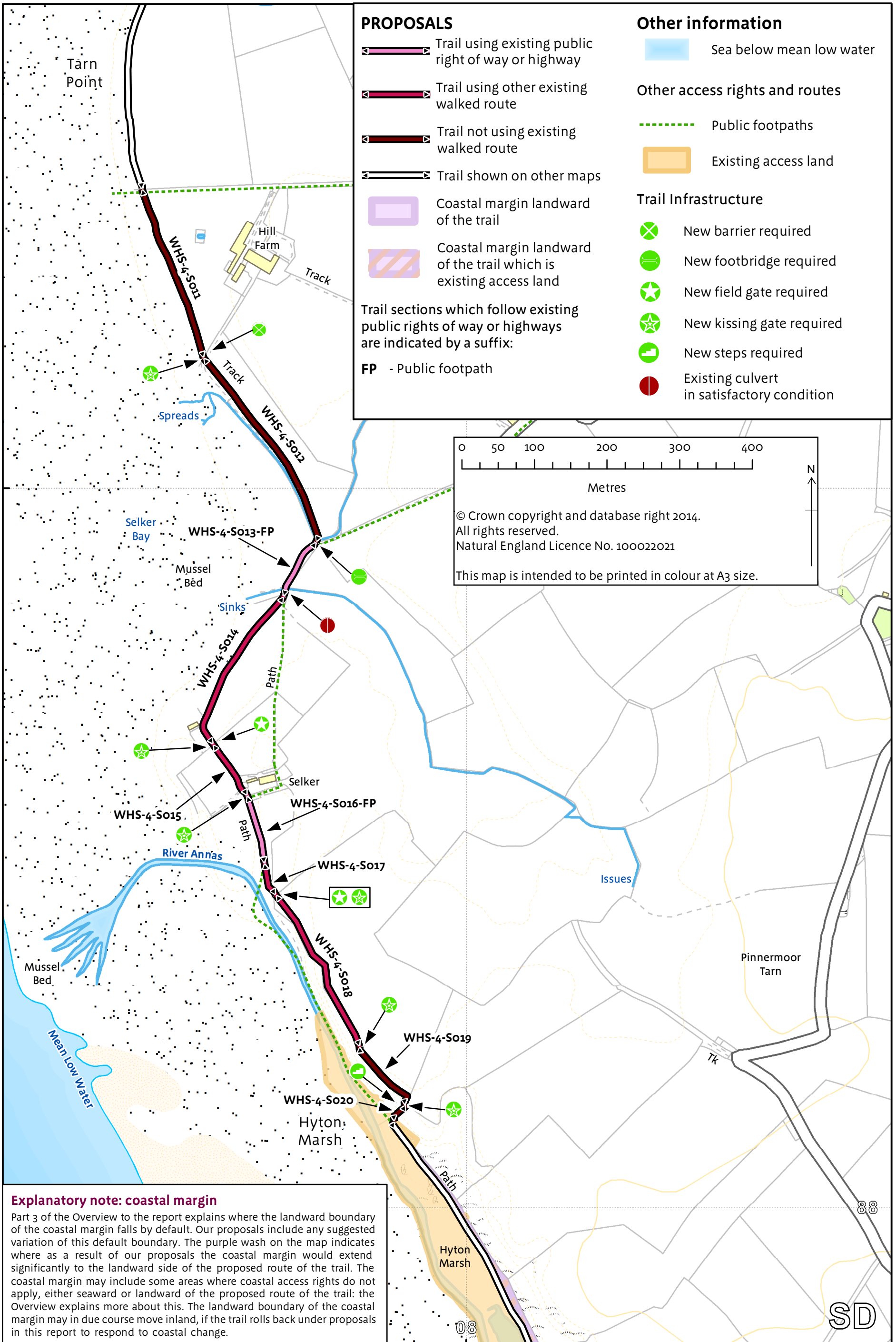


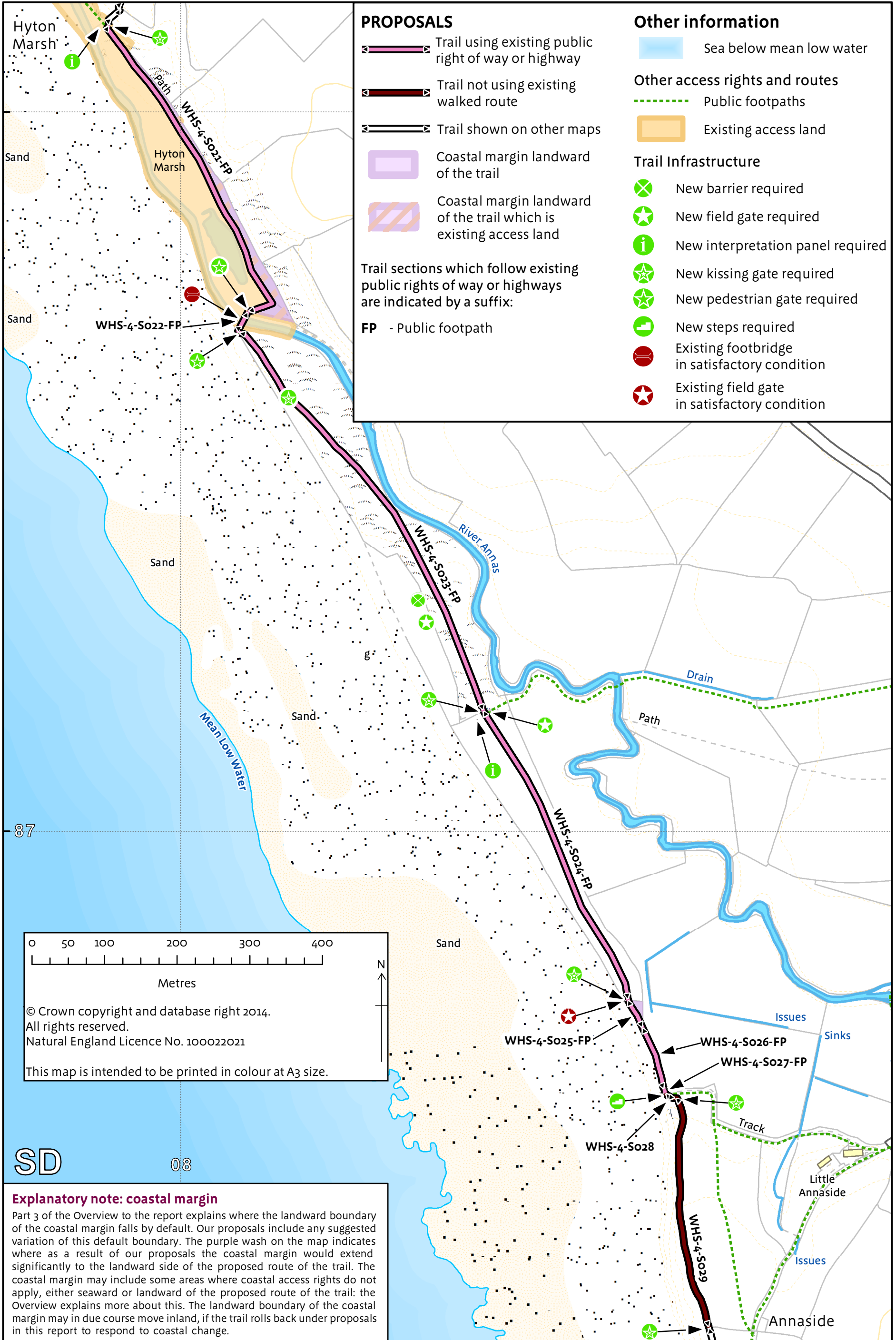
Explanatory note: coastal margin

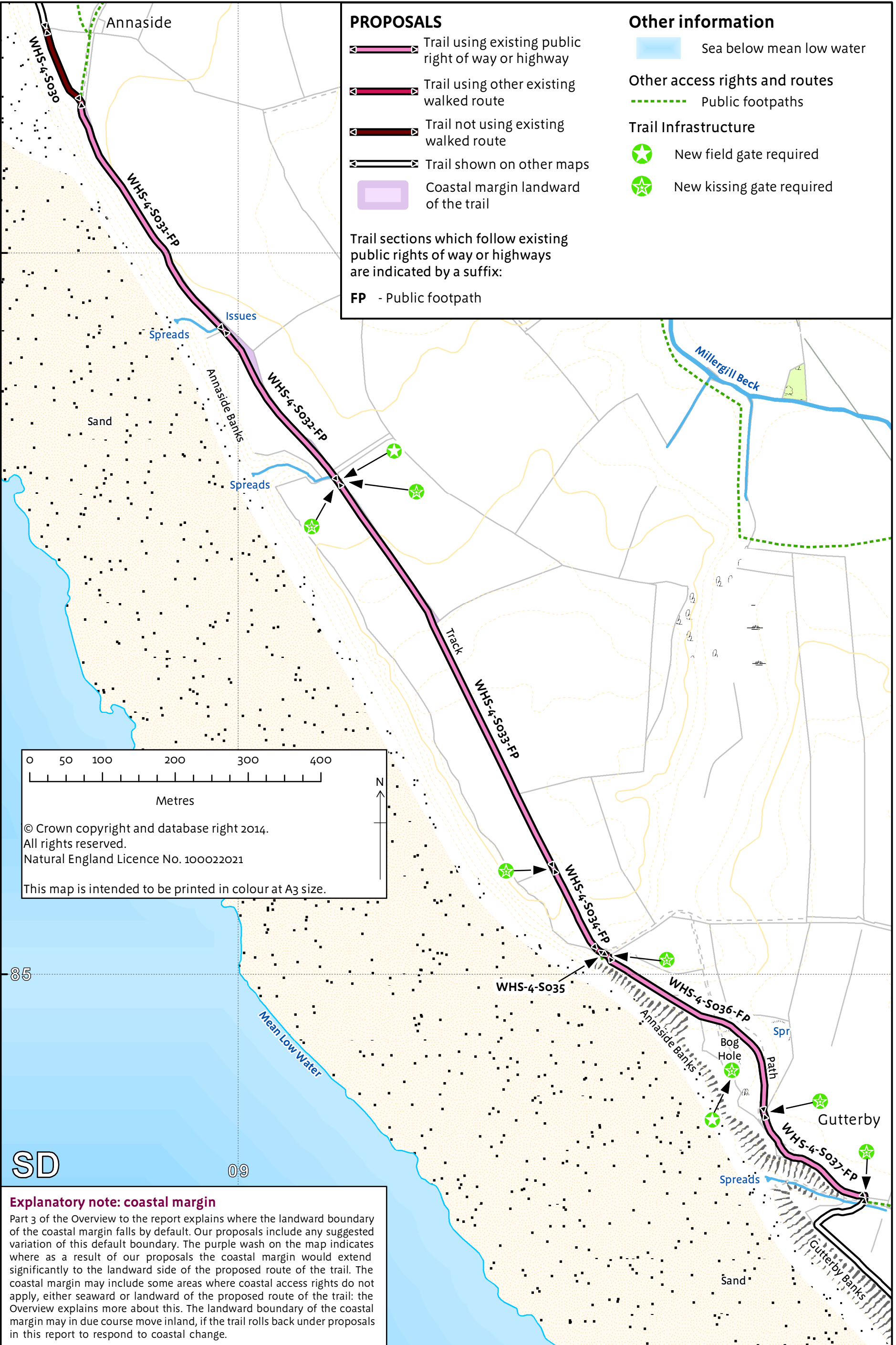
Part 3 of the Overview to the report explains where the landward boundary of the coastal margin falls by default. Our proposals include any suggested variation of this default boundary. The purple wash on the map indicates where as a result of our proposals the coastal margin would extend significantly 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.

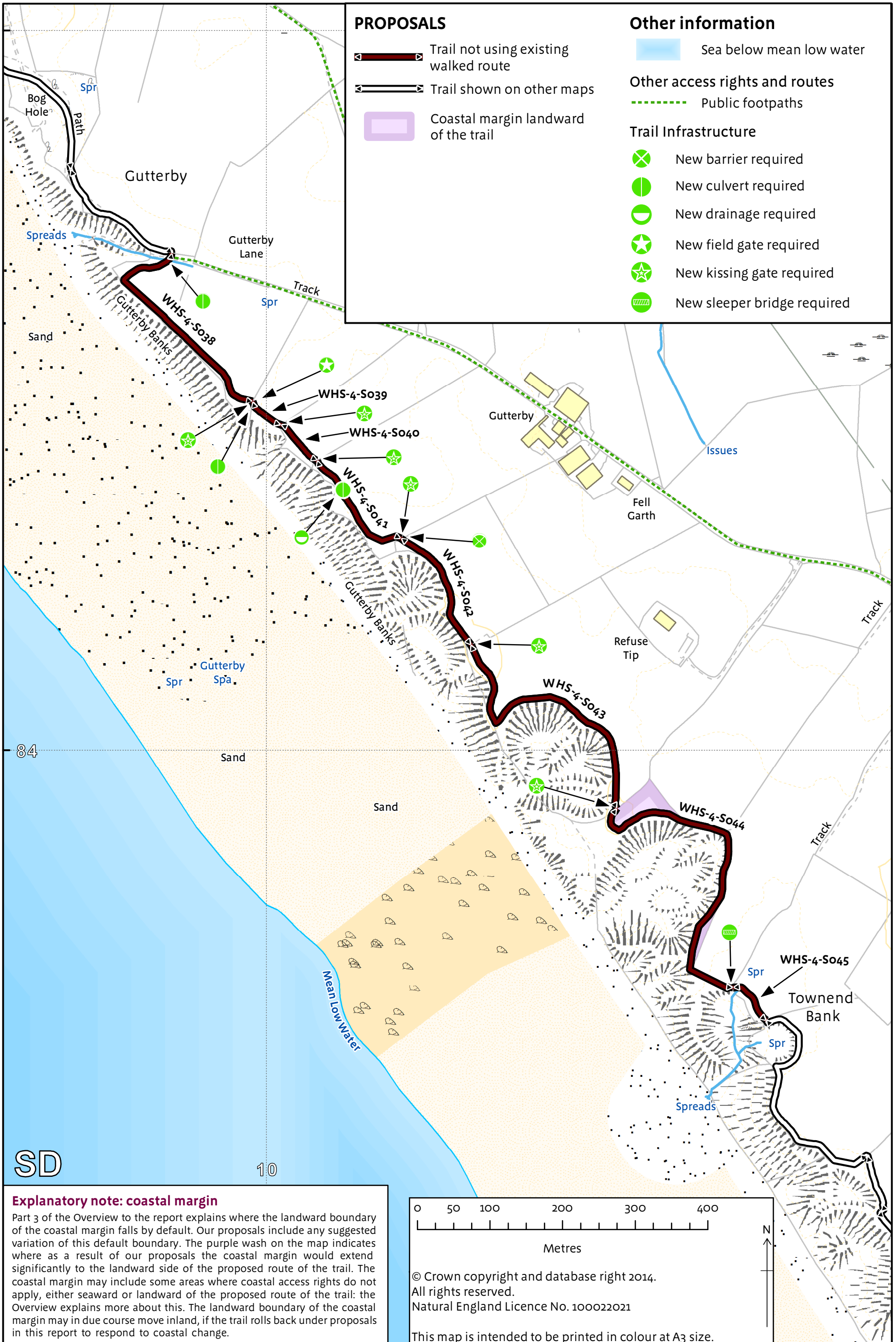


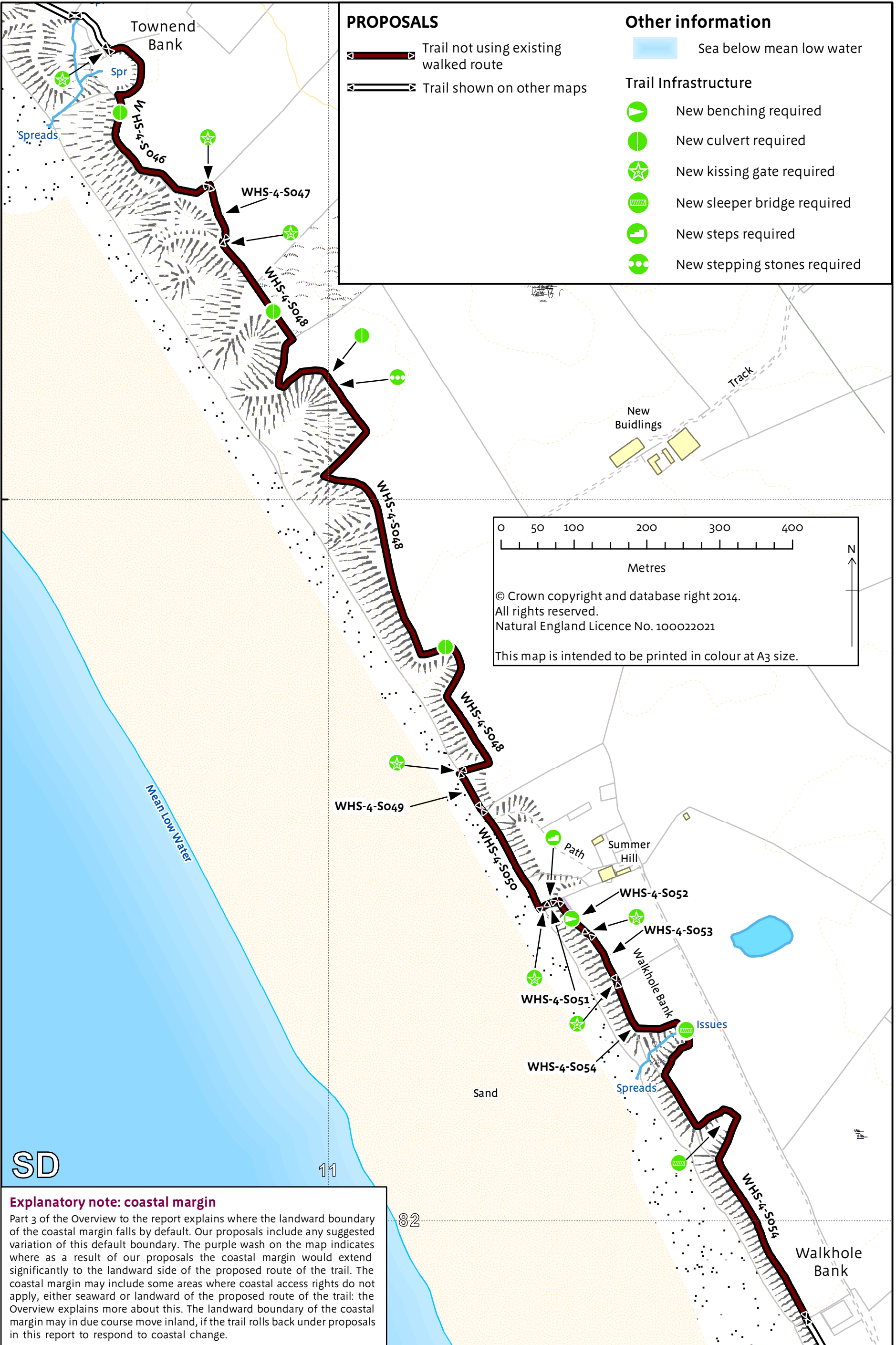








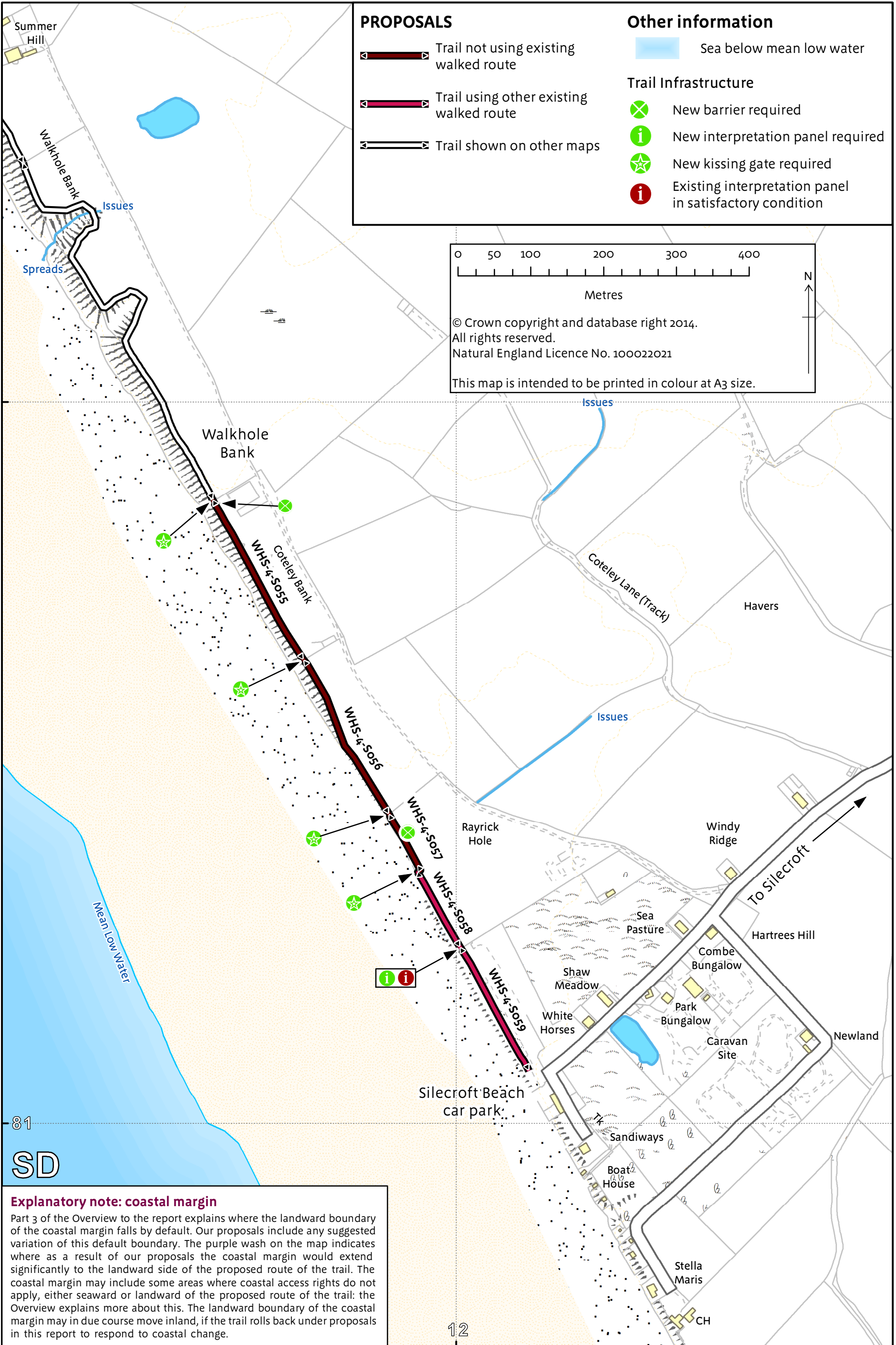




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