

Chapter 1:

Whitehaven to St Bees

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

Part 1.1: Introduction

Start Point:	South Beach car park, Whitehaven (grid reference: NX 967 182)
End Point:	Pow Beck, St Bees (grid reference: NX 969 511)
Relevant Maps:	1a to 1f

Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps:

The Trail:

- 1.1.1 Generally follows existing walked routes, including public rights of way, along this entire length. However, in some areas, it is no longer possible to walk on rights of way, due to erosion; here we have proposed either a suitable existing walked route or a new path.
- 1.1.2 Mainly follows the coastline quite closely and maintains good views of the sea.
- 1.1.3 Is aligned on the beach or foreshore just north of Pow Beck, St Bees, at the very southern end of this length of coast. See map 1f and table 1.2.1 below for details.
- 1.1.4 Follows a route similar to the existing Cumbria Coastal Way but departs from this in places in order to take account of changes to the coastline and to fit better with the criteria in the approved Coastal Access Scheme.
- 1.1.5 Will follow existing walked routes, on both sides of the small valley at Fleswick Bay, rather than the public rights of way which do not exist as walked lines on the ground.
- 1.1.6 This part of the coast includes the following sites, designated for nature conservation or heritage preservation (See map C in the Overview):
 - St. Bees Head Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its geological and wildlife interest;
 - Barrowmouth Gypsum and Alabaster mine - Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM); and
 - Saltom Coal Pit Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM).
- 1.1.7 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.
- 1.1.8 This part of the route is already well-used, on existing paths. The cliffs at St Bees head are inaccessible to all but climbers, and this will not change following introduction of new access rights. Hence, we believe that 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.

- 1.1.9 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

- 1.1.10 This part of the trail makes use of existing surfaced paths wherever these meet the criteria in the approved Coastal Access Scheme. The sections towards either end of this length – from Whitehaven harbour to Kells and on the promenade at St Bees – are highly accessible. However, much of the ground in between, over St Bees Head, may not be entirely suitable for people with reduced mobility because the trail would follow an uneven grass or bare soil path along the cliff top and would include steeper ground in places where it would be necessary to ascend/descend steps.
- 1.1.11 At Fleswick Bay, significant works will be undertaken to improve the existing path, particularly on steeper ground. 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.

- 1.1.12 Landward coastal margin: In two 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 owners of these areas of land are content for us to propose this. See Table 1.2.1 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'.

- 1.1.13 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.
- 1.1.14 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.
- 1.1.15 At Birkhams quarry (north of St Bees Head) and in the vicinity of the lifeboat slipway at St Bees, there may be occasional requirements to control access for short periods. However, this will continue to be managed on an informal basis and should cause little disruption to walkers.

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

- 1.1.16 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.
- 1.1.17 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.
- 1.1.18 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 carry out extensive works around Fleswick Bay, including installation of steps on steeper ground.

1.1.19 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. Both the south end of St Bees Head and the low cliffs adjacent to St Bees golf course are subject to continual erosion; we have proposed that these sections will need to be able to roll back in future (as laid out below).

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

Future Change

1.1.20 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 tables 1.2.1 & 1.2.3 below for details of the sections likely to be affected in the foreseeable future.

1.1.21 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 1.2: Commentary on Maps

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

1.2.1 Section Details – Maps 1a to 1f: South Beach car park, Whitehaven to Pow Beck, St Bees

Notes on table:

Column 2 – an asterisk (*) against the route section number means see also table 1.2.2: 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 1.2.3’ 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)
1a	WHS-1-S001	Other existing walked route	Tarmac	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-1-S002	Other existing walked route	Gravel	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-1-S003	Other existing walked route	Gravel	Yes – See table 1.2.3	Track	Additional landward area	None
	WHS-1-S004	Other existing walked route	Concrete	Yes – See table 1.2.3	Various	Additional landward area	None
	WHS-1-S005	Public Footpath	Concrete	Yes - Normal	Wall	Clarity & cohesion	None
	WHS-1-S006*	Public Footpath	Stone: Aggregate	Yes - Normal	Various	Additional landward area	None
1b	WHS-1-S007*	Other existing walked route	Bare Soil (compacted)	Yes – Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-1-S008*	Other existing walked route	Grass	Yes – Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-1-S009* & WHS-1-S010*	Public Footpath	Grass	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-1-S011	Other existing walked route	Grass	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-1-S012* & WHS-1-S013	Public Footpath	Grass	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-1-S014	Public Footpath	Gravel	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-1-S015	Public Footpath	Stone: Bedrock	No	Fence	Clarity & cohesion	None
1c	WHS-1-S016	Public Footpath	Grass	Yes - Normal	Fence	Clarity & cohesion	None
	WHS-1-S017	Public Footpath	Grass	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-1-S018	Public Footpath	Grass	Yes - Normal	Fence	Clarity & cohesion	None
	WHS-1-S019	Public Footpath	Grass	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-1-S020	Other existing walked route	Grass	No	Fence	Clarity & Cohesion	None
	WHS-1-S021	Other existing walked route	Grass	Yes - Normal	Fence	Clarity & Cohesion	None
	WHS-1-S022	Other existing walked route	Bare Soil (compacted)	Yes – Normal	Fence	Clarity & Cohesion	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)
1c	WHS-1-S023	Other existing walked route	Grass	Yes – Normal	Fence	Clarity & Cohesion	None
	WHS-1-S024	Public Footpath	Grass	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-1-S025	Public Footpath	Grass	Yes - Normal	Fence	Clarity & Cohesion	None
	WHS-1-S026	Other existing walked route	Grass	Yes – Normal	Fence	Clarity & Cohesion	None
	WHS-1-S027	Public Footpath	Grass	Yes – Normal	Fence	Clarity & cohesion	None
	WHS-1-S028	Public Footpath	Grass	Yes – Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
1d	WHS-1-S029 to WHS-1-S031	Public Footpath	Bare Soil (compacted)	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-1-S032	Other existing walked route	Bare Soil (compacted)	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-1-S033	Other existing walked route	Stone: Bedrock	Yes – Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-1-S034	Other existing walked route	Bare Soil (compacted)	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-1-S035	Other existing walked route	Bare Soil (compacted)	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-1-S036	Public Footpath	Bare Soil (compacted)	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
1e	WHS-1-S037 & WHS-1-S038	Public Footpath	Bare Soil (compacted)	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-1-S039 & WHS-1-S040	Public Footpath	Bare Soil (compacted)	No	Fence	Clarity & Cohesion	None
1f	WHS-1-S041	Public Footpath	Bare Soil (compacted)	Yes - Normal	Fence	Clarity & Cohesion	None
	WHS-1-S042	Public Footpath	Bare Soil (compacted)	Yes – See table 1.2.3	Fence	Clarity & Cohesion	None
	WHS-1-S043	Public Footpath	Bare Soil (compacted)	Yes – See table 1.2.3	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-1-S044	Other existing walked route	Gravel	Yes – See table 1.2.3	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-1-S045	Other existing walked route	Concrete	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-1-S046	Other existing walked route	Stone: Flags	No	Road	Additional landward area	None
	WHS-1-S047 & WHS-1-S048	Other existing walked route	Tarmac	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-1-S049	Other existing walked route	Grass	Yes – See table 1.2.3	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-1-S050	Other existing walked route	Bare Soil (compacted)	Yes – See table 1.2.3	Fence	Clarity & Cohesion	None
	WHS-1-S051 & WHS-1-S052	Other existing walked route	Bare Soil (compacted)	Yes – See table 1.2.3	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WHS-1-S053	Other existing walked route	Shingle	Yes – See table 1.2.3	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None

1.2.2 Other options considered: Maps 1a & 1b: Kells to Birkhams quarry

Map(s)	Section number(s)	Option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option as the route
1a & 1b	WHS-1-S006 to WHS-1-S010	We considered aligning the trail on the tarmac track slightly further inland.	We opted for the proposed route because it is closer to the sea and maintains views of the sea. The tarmac path remains available to walkers and may well provide a more accessible alternative to those with reduced mobility.
1b	WHS-1-S012	We considered proposing the inclusion of additional land within the margin (the existing CROW access land).	It wasn't possible to gain the consent of the land owner, but the land remains accessible to the public under CROW rights.

1.2.3 Roll-back implementation – more complex situations:

Map 1a: South Beach car park, Whitehaven to Kells

Map 1f: Pattering Holes, St Bees to Pow Beck, St Bees

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
1a	WHS-1-S003 & WSH-1-S004	Sports ground and mining museum	If it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of the specified excepted land (the rugby pitch and Haig mining museum), we will choose a route landward of it, following discussions with owners and occupiers.
1f	WHS-1-S042 to WHS-1-S044	Caravan site	If it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of the caravan site, we will choose a new route after detailed discussions with all relevant interests, either (a) to pass through the site, or (b) if this is not practicable, to pass somewhere on the landward side of it. 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.
1f	WHS-1-S049 to WHS-1-S053	Golf course and caravan site	If it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of either the caravan site or golf course, we will choose a new route after detailed discussions with all relevant interests, either (a) to pass through the site / course, or (b) if this is not practicable, to pass somewhere on the landward side of it. 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.

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 1.3: Chapter 1 - Formal Proposals

- Below are our formal proposals to the Secretary of State for the length of coast shown on maps 1a to 1f.
- They should be read in conjunction with the relevant maps.
- The commentary above explains the practical effect of these proposals.

Formal Proposals – South Beach car park, Whitehaven to Pow Beck, St Bees

Proposed route of the trail

- 1.3.1 In relation to route sections WHS-1-S001 & WHS-1-S002, WHS-1-S011 to WHS-1-S015, WHS-1-S020, WHS-1-S029 to WHS-1-S032, WHS-1-S035 to WHS-1-040 and WHS-1-S045 to WHS-1-S048, the route is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps 1a to 1f as the proposed route of the trail.
- 1.3.2 In relation to route sections WHS-1-S003 to WHS-1-S010, WHS-1-S016 to WHS-1-S019, WHS-1-S021 to WHS-1-S028, WHS-1-S033 & WHS-1-S034, WHS-1-S041 to WHS-1-044 and WHS-1-S049 to WHS-1-S053, the route, as initially determined at the time the report was prepared, is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps 1a to 1f as the proposed route of the trail.
- 1.3.3 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

- 1.3.4 Adjacent to route sections WHS-1-S003 & WHS-1-S004, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with a combination of existing boundary fences and the seaward edge of tracks or roads, as indicated by the coastal margin landward of the trail on map 1a.
- 1.3.5 Adjacent to route section WHS-1-S005, 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 map 1a.
- 1.3.6 Adjacent to route section WHS-1-S006 the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with landward edge of the tarmac path, as indicated by the coastal margin landward of the trail on map 1a.
- 1.3.7 Adjacent to route sections WHS-1-S015, WHS-1-S016, WHS-1-S018, WHS-1-S020 to WHS-1-S023, WHS-1-S025 to WHS-1-S027, WHS-1-S039 to WHS-1-S042 & WHS-1-S050, 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 1b, 1c, 1e & 1f.
- 1.3.8 Adjacent to route section WHS-1-S046, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the seaward edge of tracks and car parks, as indicated by the coastal margin landward of the trail on map 1f.

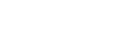
Local restrictions and exclusions

- 1.3.9 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

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

PROPOSALS

-  Trail using existing public right of way or highway
-  Trail using other existing walked route
-  Trail shown on other maps
-  Allonby to Whitehaven Approved Route
-  Coastal margin landward of the trail

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

FP - Public footpath

Other information

 Sea below mean low water

Other access rights and routes

 Public footpaths

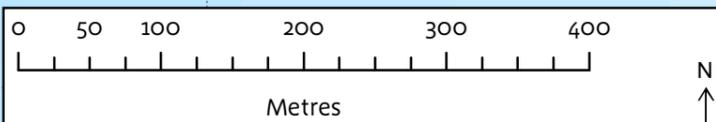
Trail Infrastructure

 Existing barrier in satisfactory condition

 Existing bollard in satisfactory condition

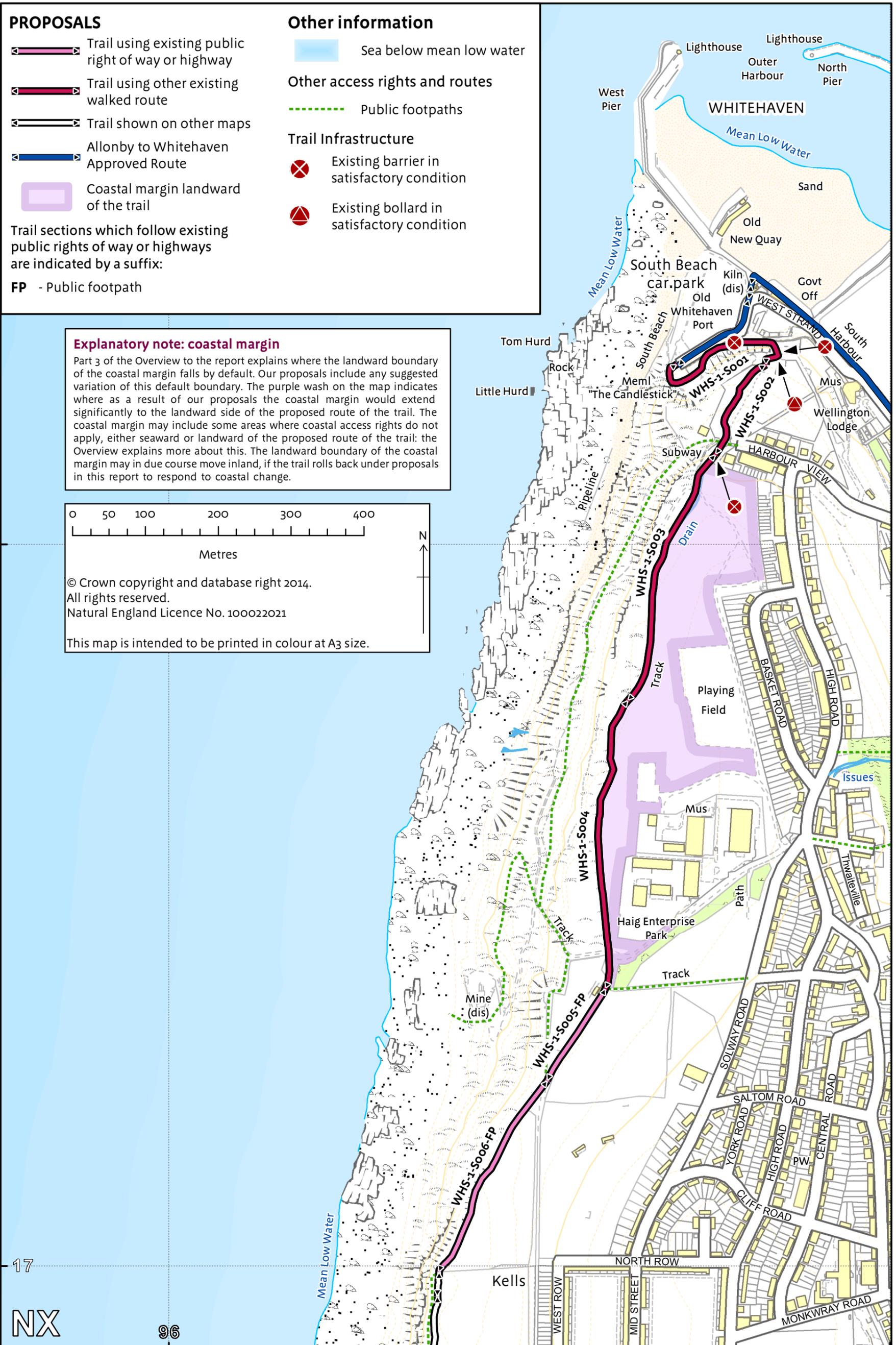
Explanatory note: coastal margin

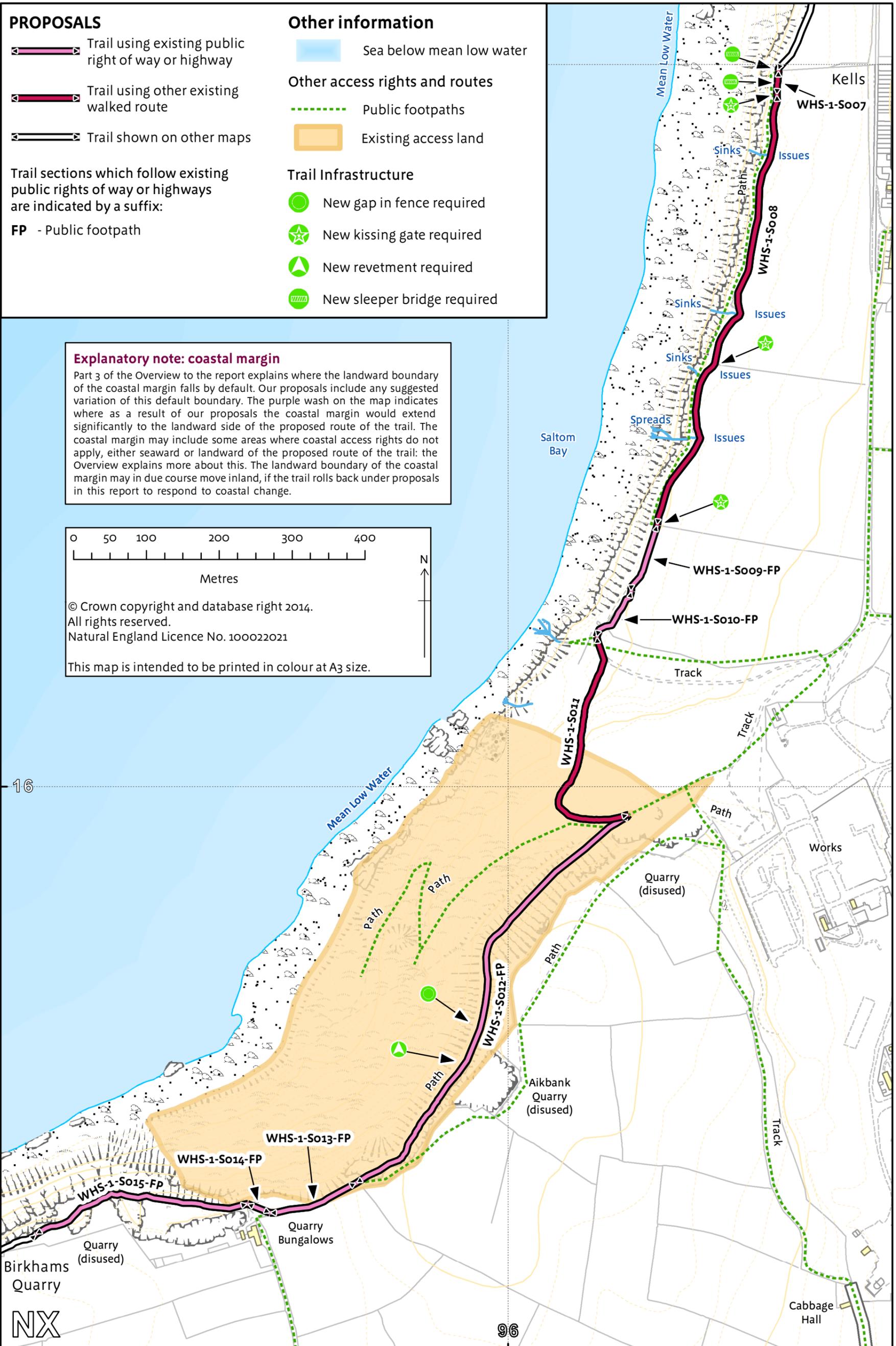
Part 3 of the Overview to the report explains where the landward boundary of the coastal margin falls by default. Our proposals include any suggested variation of this default boundary. The purple wash on the map indicates where as a result of our proposals the coastal margin would extend significantly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

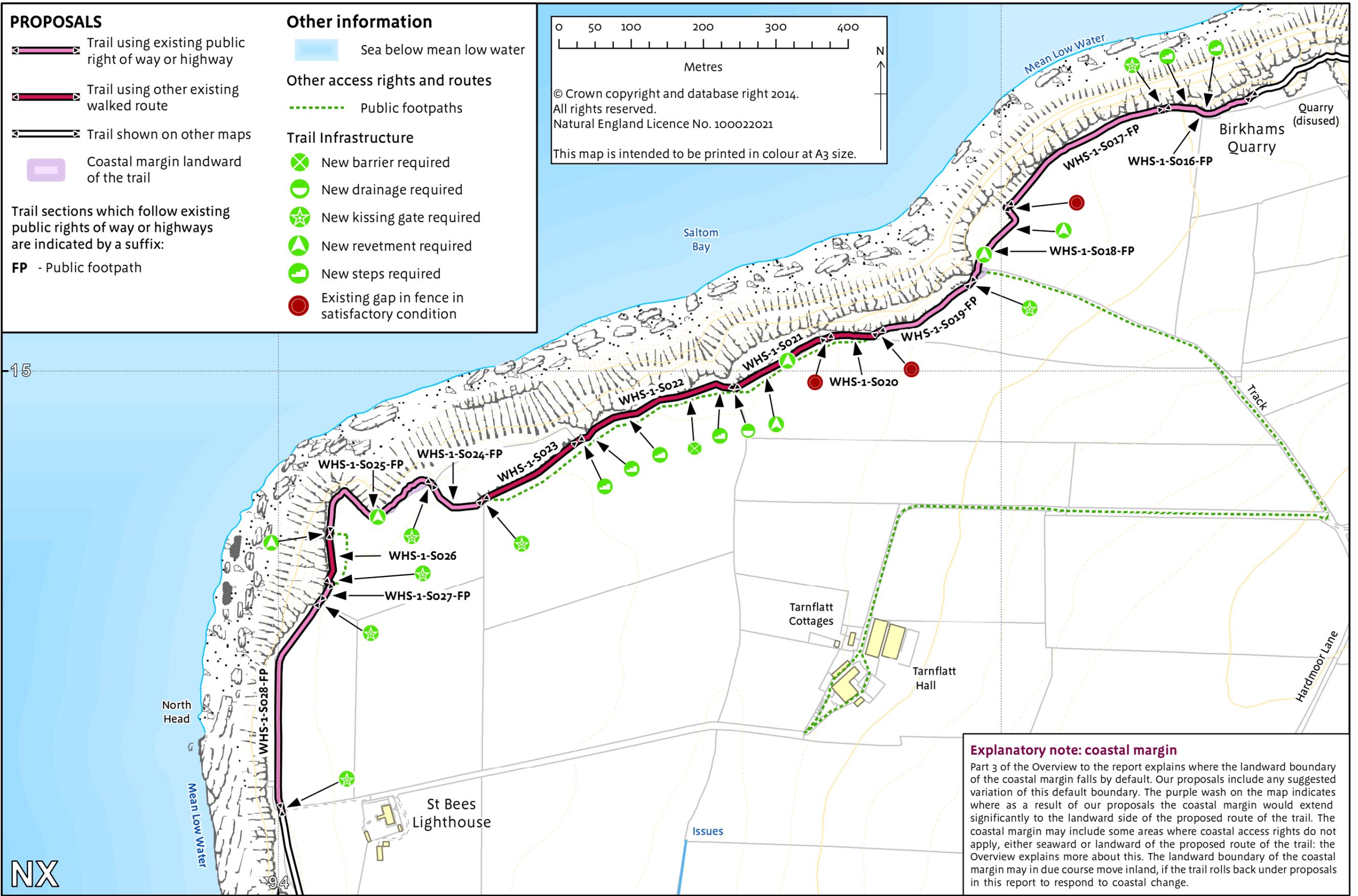


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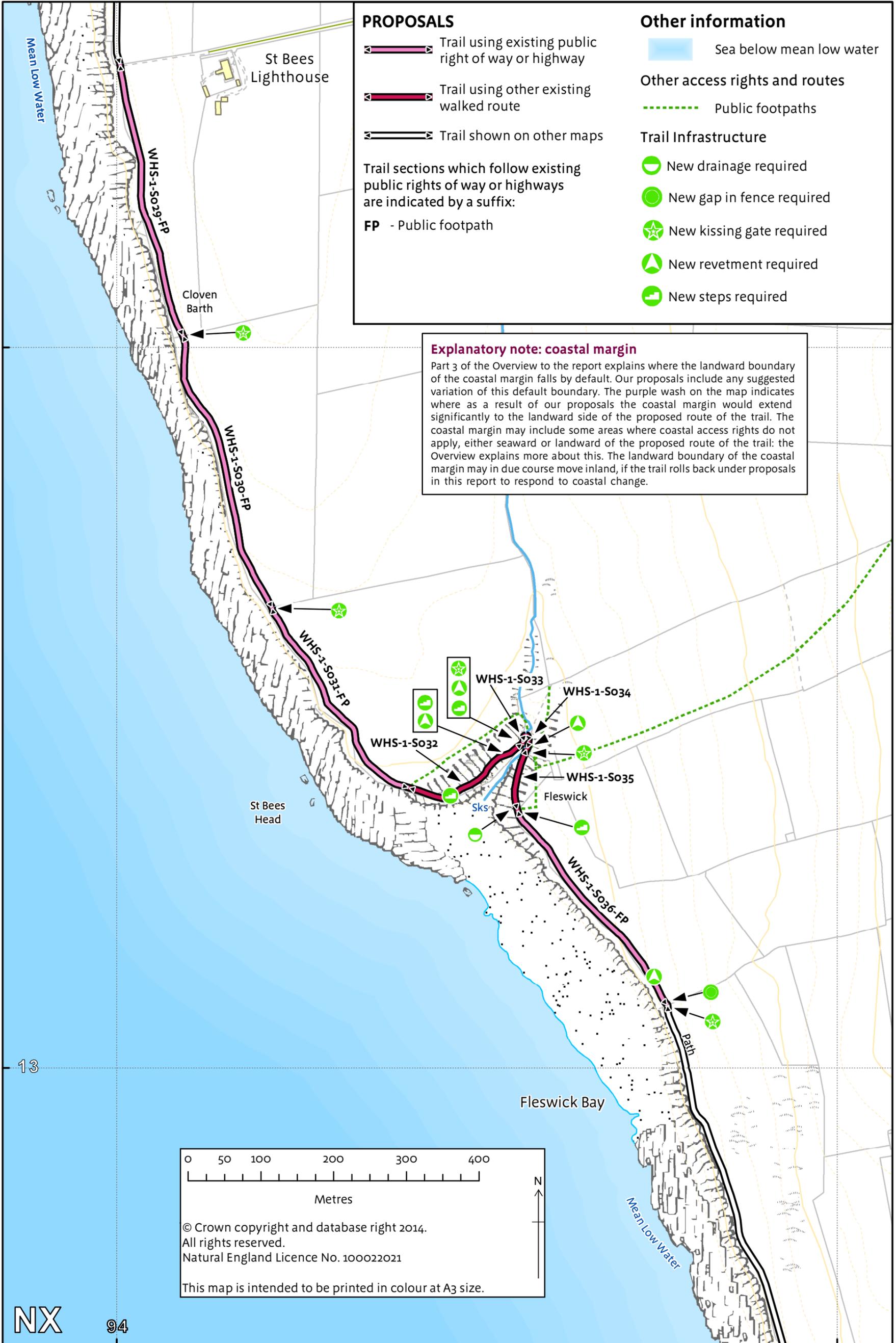




Explanatory note: coastal margin

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 1c Birkhams Quarry to St Bees Lighthouse



13

