

Chapter 2:

Charmouth Beach to Seatown

Coastal Access: Lyme Regis to Rufus Castle - Natural England's Proposals

Part 2.1: Introduction

Start Point:	Charmouth Beach (grid reference: SY 3663 9312)
End Point:	Seatown (grid reference: SY 4200 9176)
Relevant Maps:	2a to 2d

Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps:

The Trail:

- 2.1.1 Follows the South West Coast Path, using public footpaths and other existing walked routes along the cliff top (see maps 2b, 2c & 2d), except as detailed in paragraphs 2.1.2 and 2.1.3 below.
- 2.1.2 Between Charmouth and Cain's Folly, the proposed route avoids areas of active landslip and erosion but is much closer to the sea. See map 2a and table 2.2.1 below for details of the proposed route and table 2.2.2 for a more detailed explanation of the other route option we considered.
- 2.1.3 At Golden Cap, we propose a minor change to protect the scheduled monument (see map 2d, LRR-2-S030).
- 2.1.4 Maintains excellent views of the sea for the most part, but cuts inland at Seatown to take the trail past an unstable cliff edge and some nearby buildings and gardens (see map 2d).
- 2.1.5 This part of the coast includes the following sites, designated for nature conservation, geological or heritage preservation (see map C of the Overview):
 - Sidmouth to West Bay Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
 - West Dorset Coast 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.

See part 5 of the Overview for more details about the assessment process described above, and refer to our published Access and Sensitive Features Appraisal for more information about the conclusions of the assessment process.

Accessibility

- 2.1.7 Generally, there are few artificial barriers to accessibility on the proposed route. However, there are places where it may not be entirely suitable for people with reduced mobility because:
- the trail would follow an uneven and narrow grass or bare soil path along the cliff top; or
 - there are steps where it would be necessary to ascend/descend steep slopes, such as at Cain's Folly (see sections LRR-2-S014 on map 2a) and at Golden Cap (see sections LRR-2-S028 and LRR-2-S030 on map 2d).
- 2.1.8 At Broom Cliff, the existing stiles will be replaced with gates, so as to make the trail more accessible for people with reduced mobility (see maps 2b and 2c). We envisage this happening once they have reached the end of their useful life. The existing barrier on the cliff east of the footbridge at Charmouth (see map 2a) will be removed as part of the establishment works for the trail.

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 (see table 2.2.1 below).
- 2.1.10 Landward boundary of the coastal margin: In some 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 owner of this land is content for us to propose this.
- 2.1.11 Restrictions and/or exclusions: The new access rights would also be subject to the excepted land types summarised in Annex C of the Overview, and the national restrictions on activities listed in Annex D. This would be so throughout the coastal margin, but these restrictions would not apply to the existing 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 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'.

Establishment and ongoing management of the trail

- 2.1.12 Some physical establishment of the trail would be necessary, in accordance with the general approach described in part 6 the Overview. In addition:
- on route sections LRR-2-S003 and LRR-2-S004 (see map 2a) a mown path would be maintained until the trail is established and clearly visible on the ground. New pedestrian gates will also be installed where needed;
 - at Cain's Folly (LRR-2-S014 – see map 2a) scrub and blackthorn would be cut back between the footpath and fence line to enable safer passage away from the cliff edge.
- 2.1.13 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

- 2.1.14 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 tables 2.2.1 and 2.2.3 below for details of the sections likely to be affected in the foreseeable future.
- 2.1.15 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 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

2.2.1 Section details: Maps 2a to 2d, Charmouth Beach to Seatown

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
2a	LRR-2-S001* and LRR-2-S002*	Public footpath	Grass	Yes: normal	Hedge or fence line	Clarity and cohesion	None
	LRR-2-S003* and LRR-2-S004*	Not an existing walked route	Grass	Yes: normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	LRR-2-S005* to LRR-2-S008*	Not an existing walked route	Grass	Yes: normal	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	None
	LRR-2-S009*	Other existing walked route	Grass	Yes: normal	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	None
	LRR-2-S010*	Public footpath	Bare soil (compacted)	Yes – see table 2.2.3	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	LRR-2-S011*	Public footpath	Steps: long backfilled	Yes – see table 2.2.3	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	None
	LRR-2-S012*	Public footpath	Bare soil (compacted)	Yes: normal	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	None
	LRR-2-S013*	Public footpath	Steps: long backfilled	Yes: normal	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	None
	LRR-2-S014*	Public footpath	Bare soil (compacted)	Yes: normal	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	None
2b	LRR-2-S015	Other existing walked route	Grass	Yes: normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	LRR-2-S016	Public footpath	Grass	Yes: normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	LRR-2-S017 and LRR-2-S018	Other existing walked route	Grass	Yes: normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	LRR-2-S019	Public footpath	Steps: long backfilled	Yes: normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	LRR-2-S020	Public footpath	Grass	Yes: normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
2c	LRR-2-S021 to LRR-2-S024	Public footpath	Grass	Yes: normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	LRR-2-S025	Other existing walked route	Grass	Yes: normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	LRR-2-S026 to LRR-2-S027	Public footpath	Grass	Yes: normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
2d	LRR-2-S028	Public footpath	Steps: long backfilled	Yes: normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	LRR-2-S029	Public footpath	Grass	Yes: normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	LRR-2-S030	Other existing walked route	Grass	Yes: normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	LRR-2-S031	Public footpath	Steps: long backfilled	Yes: normal	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
2d	LRR-2-S032 to LRR-2-S033	Public footpath	Grass	Yes: normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	LRR-2-S034* to LRR-2-S035*	Public footpath	Bare soil (compacted)	Yes: normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	LRR-2-S036*	Public footpath	Bare soil (ploughed)	Yes: normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	LRR-2-S037*	Public footpath	Bare soil (compacted)	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	LRR-2-S038*	Public highway	Tarmac	No	Road	Clarity and cohesion	None

2.2.2 Other options considered: Maps 2a to 2d, Charmouth Beach to Seatown

Map(s)	Section number(s)	Option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option as the route
2a	LRR-2-S001 to LRR-2-S014	<p>We considered aligning the trail along the existing diversion of the South West Coast Path, that follows public footpaths and highways as shown on the map.</p> <p>No other options were identified for the trail in relation to this map.</p>	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ it is closer to the sea and maintains views of the sea; ■ it is a more direct route; ■ it avoids a long section of road walking with no pavement; ■ this proposal is made with the support of the landowner; ■ 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.
2d	LRR-2-S034 to LRR-2-S038	<p>We considered the following options for aligning the trail:</p> <p>Option 1: A re-instatement of the currently closed footpath along the cliff edge to Seatown.</p> <p>Option 2: At the eastern end of LRR-2-S033, enter the field and follow close to the seaward fence line to point A (see map), then descend the slumped cliff to Seatown.</p> <p>Option 3: Follow the existing route of the South West Coast Path, but following along the seaward edge of the arable field at LRR-2-S036.</p>	<p>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 because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Option 1 is not viable due to fissures and cracks in the cliff-top, suggesting continued instability. A recent commissioned geologists report (Halcrow 2007 – see bibliography in the Overview) recommended that this route was not sustainable in the short to medium term due to predicted erosion rates. ■ Option 2 is not viable due to the terrain of the slumped cliff and the presence of private gardens at point A. Continued movement of the cliff, and gulying during wet seasons have opened up deep fissures and potholes in the surface. There is also a significant area of dense scrub. The infrastructure installed to enable a suitable walking surface, such as steps and boardwalk, would be in constant need of replacement as the cliff continues to move. ■ Option 3 is not viable due to very wet and boggy conditions along the seaward side of the arable field, and a loss of sea views from this point.

2.2.3 Roll-back implementation – more complex situations: Map 2a Seadown Holiday Park to Cain’s Folly

Map(s)	Section number(s)	Option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option as the route
2a	LRR-2-S010 and LRR-2-S011	Pinch point between clifftop and steep valley landward of the cliff between Charmouth and Cain’s Folly	If it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of the valley, we will choose a new route after detailed discussions with all relevant interests, 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.

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 – Charmouth Beach to Seatown

Proposed route of the trail

- 2.3.1 In relation to route sections LRR-2-S001 to LRR-2-S035, the initial proposed route, as 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 the route described in the previous paragraph needs to change in order to remain viable, as a result of coastal erosion or other geomorphological processes or encroachment by the sea, the new route will be determined by Natural England 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 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.
- 2.3.3 In relation to route sections LRR-2-S036 to LRR-2-S038, the route is to be at the centre of the line shown on map 2d as the proposed route of the trail.

Landward boundary of coastal margin

- 2.3.4 Adjacent to route section LRR-2-S001, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the existing boundary fence and hedge, as indicated by the coastal margin landward of the trail on map 2a.
- 2.3.5 Adjacent to route section LRR-2-S002, 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 public footpath shown as the trail on map 2a.
- 2.3.6 Adjacent to route sections LRR-2-S005 to LRR-2-S009, 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 public footpath shown as the trail on map 2a.
- 2.3.7 Adjacent to route sections LRR-2-S011 to LRR-2-S014, 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 public footpath shown as the trail on map 2a.
- 2.3.8 Adjacent to route section LRR-2-S038, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with landward edge of the road shown as the trail on map 2d.

Local restrictions and exclusions

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







