

Chapter 6:

# Exmouth to Otter Estuary

England Coast Path: Kingswear to Lyme Regis - Natural England's Proposals

## Part 6.1: Introduction

<b>Start Point:</b>	<b>Exmouth</b> (grid reference: SX 9935 8067)
<b>End Point:</b>	<b>Otter Estuary</b> (grid reference: SY 0732 8198)
<b>Relevant Maps:</b>	<b>6a to 6f</b>

### Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps:

#### The Trail:

- 6.1.1 Follows the existing South West Coast Path as currently walked and managed between Exmouth and the Otter Estuary (route sections KLR-6-S001 to KLR-6-S033). The South West Coast Path mainly follows public rights of way along this length.
- 6.1.2 Mainly follows the coastline quite closely and maintains good views of the sea, apart from at Straight Point where the route passes landward of the rifle range.
- 6.1.3 We propose to adopt the line of the South West Coast Path along this section of coast. There are places where the existing walked route of the South West Coast Path over this length differs slightly from the route originally approved by the Secretary of State, as the path has adapted over time to cope with coastal erosion and other processes. Assuming these proposals are approved, we intend both routes to follow the same line. As explained at part 5a of the Overview, we use a separate variation report to the Secretary of State to change the existing approved route of the national trail line to reflect the approved line of the England Coast Path wherever appropriate.
- 6.1.4 This part of the coast includes the following sites, designated for nature conservation, geological or heritage preservation (See map C of the Overview):
- Exe Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA)
  - Exe Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
  - Budleigh Salterton Cliffs Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

6.1.5 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:**

6.1.6 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 along some sections of this stretch (mostly between Orecombe Point and Jubilee Park);
- There are steps in places along the trail where it would be necessary to ascend/descend (for example near Orecombe Point and east of Devon Cliffs Holiday Park);
- There are kissing gates and footbridges on this stretch (near to West Down Beacon);

6.1.7 East of Devon Cliffs Holiday Park the existing kissing gate will be improved to make it 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 Section 3 of the Overview.

6.1.8 Estuary: The report proposes that the trail should extend upstream from the open coast a short distance as far as the ferry across the River Exe. See part 3 of the Overview. The ferry operates a seasonal service from Easter to the end of October, on an hourly basis during the daytime, seven days a week between Starcross and Exmouth. An alternative route that makes use of the existing Exe Estuary Trail would be available at the times when the ferry service is not running and would extend to Countess Wear bridge which is the first public foot crossing over the River Exe (see chapter 5 for further details about the alternative route).

6.1.9 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 6.2.1 for details.

6.1.10 At Orecombe Point (route section KLR-6-S009) we have used our discretion to propose the inclusion of an additional, more extensive landward area within the coastal margin, to secure or enhance public enjoyment of this part of the coast. The owner of this land (National Trust) is content for us to propose this. See map 6b and Table 6.2.1 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'.**

6.1.11 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.

### **Establishment and ongoing management of the trail**

6.1.12 There are no additional measures that we consider necessary to improve the safety or convenience of the trail on this length of coast.

6.1.13 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:**

6.1.14 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 Table 6.2.1 for details of the sections likely to be affected in the foreseeable future.

6.1.15 The Lower Otter Restoration project is examining the possibility of a managed realignment scheme at the mouth of the River Otter. The project is currently in an early phase and seeking funding to progress. It is possible that a breach in the river bank may happen naturally prior to the commencement of the project; any such inundation event will impact on the route of the England Coast Path as proposed in this report. Should the current route become impassable, a new route for the England Coast Path will be identified.

6.1.16 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 6.2: Commentary on Maps

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

### 6.2.1 Details for sections that follow the existing South West Coast Path: Maps 6a to 6f: Exmouth to Otter Estuary

Notes on table:

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 6.2.3 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
Maps	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)
6a	KLR-6-S001 to KLR-6-S002	No	Various	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-6-S003	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-6-S004	No	Road	Clarity and cohesion	None
6a & 6b	KLR-6-S005	No	Promenade edge	Clarity and cohesion	None
6b	KLR-6-S006	No	Path	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-6-S007 to KLR-6-S008	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-6-S009	Yes - Normal	Fence line	Additional landward area	None
6c	KLR-6-S010	Yes - Normal	Fence line	Additional landward area	None
	KLR-6-S011	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	KLR-6-S012	Yes - Normal	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-6-S013	Yes - Normal	Path	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-6-S014	No	Various	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-6-S015	No	Path	Clarity and cohesion	None
6d	KLR-6-S016	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	KLR-6-S017	Yes - Normal	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-6-S018	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	KLR-6-S019	Yes - Normal	Path	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-6-S020	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	KLR-6-S021	Yes - See table 6.2.3	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
6e	KLR-6-S022 to KLR-6-S023	Yes - See table 6.2.3	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-6-S024 to KLR-6-S026	Yes - See table 6.2.3	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	KLR-6-S027 to KLR-6-S028	Yes - See table 6.2.3	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	None
6f	KLR-6-S029	Yes - See table 6.2.3	Hedgerow	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-6-S030	Yes - See table 6.2.3	Path	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-6-S031	Yes - See table 6.2.3	Promenade edge	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-6-S032	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	None
	KLR-6-S033	Yes - See table 6.2.3	Promenade edge	Clarity and cohesion	None

## 6.2.2 Other options considered: Maps 6a to 6f: Exmouth to Otter Estuary

Maps	Section number(s)	Option(s) considered	Reasons why no other options were identified
6a to 6f	KLR-6-S001 to KLR-6-S033	No other options were identified for the trail in relation to these maps.	The route of the existing South West Coast path is aligned close to the sea along the majority of this section of coast and therefore could not be improved upon.

## 6.2.3 Roll-back implementation – more complex situations: Maps 6a to 6f: Exmouth to Otter Estuary

Map(s)	Section number(s)	Feature or site potentially affected	How we will manage roll-back in relation to this feature or site
6e	KLR-6-S021 to KLR-6-S025	Golf course - East Devon Golf Club	If it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of the specified golf course, we will choose a new route after detailed discussions with all relevant interests, either (a) to pass through the 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.
	KLR-6-S026 to KLR-6-S031	Houses and park	If it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of the specified excepted land (e.g. buildings, curtilage, gardens, park etc), we will choose a route, either a) to pass through the excepted land (we will investigate whether it is possible to pass through the park on existing PRoW), or b) to pass landward of it, following discussions with owners and occupiers.

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 6.3: Chapter 6 - Formal Proposals

- Below are our formal proposals to the Secretary of State for the length of coast shown on maps 6a to 6f.
- They should be read in conjunction with the relevant maps.
- The commentary above explains the practical effect of these proposals.

### Formal Proposals – Exmouth to Otter Estuary

#### Discretion to include an estuary

6.3.1 Natural England proposes to exercise its functions as if the sea included the estuarial waters of the River Exe as far as the Starcross to Exmouth ferry as indicated by the extent of the trail shown on map 6a. In addition Natural England proposes to exercise its same functions in relation to an alternative route that would extend upstream from the ferry as far as Countess Wear bridge which is the first public foot crossing over the River Exe See 6.1.8 for further details.

#### Proposed route of the trail

- 6.3.2 In relation to route sections KLR-6-S001 to KLR-6-S008, KLR-6-S014 to KLR-6-S016, KLR-6-S032 to KLR-1-S033 the route is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps 6a to 6d and 6f as the proposed route of the trail.
- 6.3.3 In relation to route sections KLR-6-S009 to KLR-6-S013, KLR-6-S017 to KLR-6-S031, and KLR-6-033 the route, as initially determined at the time the report was prepared, is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps 6b to 6f as the proposed route of the trail.
- 6.3.4 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

- 6.3.5 Adjacent to route sections KLR-6-S009 and KLR-6-S010 the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the existing fence line, as indicated by the coastal margin landward of the trail on map 6b.
- 6.3.6 Adjacent to route sections KLR-6-S007 to KLR-6-S008, KLR-6-S012, KLR-6-S017, KLR-6-S022 to KLR-6-S023 and KLR-6-S027 to KLR-6-S028 the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the existing fence line which at the time of writing this report is at the landward edge of the trail shown on maps 6a to 6e.

- 6.3.7 Adjacent to route section KLR-6-S029 the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the existing hedgerow which at the time of writing this report is at the landward edge of the trail shown on map 6f.
- 6.3.8 Adjacent to route sections KLR-6-S001 to KLR-6-S002 and KLR-6-S014 the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with various boundary features which at the time of writing this report are at the landward edge of the trail shown on maps 6a and 6d.
- 6.3.9 Adjacent to route sections KLR-6-S003 and KLR-6-S032 the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the pavement shown as the trail on maps 6a and 6f.
- 6.3.10 Adjacent to route section KLR-6-S004 the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the road shown as the trail on map 6
- 6.3.11 Adjacent to route sections KLR-6-S005, KLR-6-S031 and KLR-6-S033 the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the promenade shown as the trail on maps 6a, 6b and 6f.
- 6.3.12 Adjacent to route sections KLR-6-S006, KLR-6-S013, KLR-6-S015, KLR-6-S019 and KLR-6-S030 the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the path shown as the trail on maps 6b, 6c, 6d and 6f.

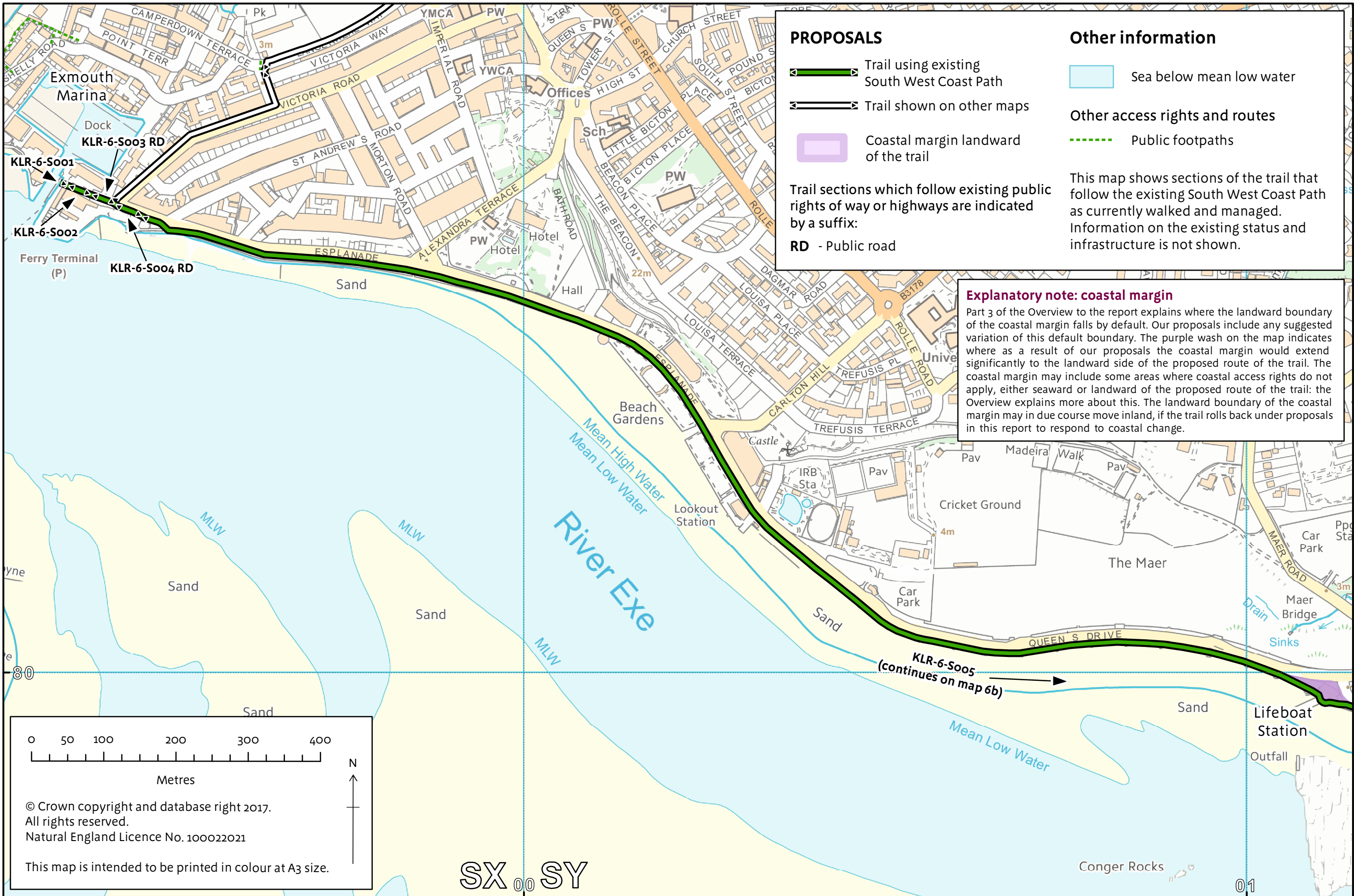
### **Local restrictions and exclusions**

- 6.3.13 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**

- 6.3.14 At the time of writing this report, there are no proposals for alternative routes in relation to this length of coast.








Map 6a Exmouth Marina to Exmouth Lifeboat Station



**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.

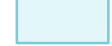

**PROPOSALS**

-  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:

**FP** - Public footpath

**Other information**

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

