

Chapter 3:

# Worthy to The Foreland

England Coast Path: Minehead to Combe Martin - Natural England's Proposals

## Part 3.1: Introduction

<b>Start Point:</b>	<b>Worthy</b> (grid reference: SS 8584 4818 )
<b>End Point:</b>	<b>The Foreland</b> (grid reference: SS 7593 5033)
<b>Relevant Maps:</b>	<b>3a to 3f</b>

### Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps:

#### The Trail:

- 3.1.1 Follows the existing South West Coast Path as currently walked and managed between Worthy and Yenworthy Combe near Glenthorne (route sections MCM-3-S001 to MCM-3-S010), and between Handball and The Foreland (route sections MCM-3-S024 to MCM-3-S032). The existing South West Coast Path follows public rights of way and permissive paths (for example through Culbone Wood) along this length. See maps 3a to 3c and 3e to 3f and associated table 3.2.1 below for more details.
- 3.1.2 Differs from the existing South West Coast Path along a 2.7km length at Glenthorne between Yenworthy Combe and Handball (route sections MCM-3-S011 to MCM-3-S023). This new section takes the route to the seaward side of Glenthorne House and significantly closer to the sea with improved views along the coastline. See map 3d and associated table 3.2.2 below for details.
- 3.1.3 Passes through land that is excepted land under Schedule 1 to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) by virtue of it being land used as a garden (route sections MCM-3-S015 to MCM-3-S021). The owner has made an undertaking to dedicate as coastal margin parts of his property, including sections of his garden for access in perpetuity. The dedication would remove the excepted land status of that land and enable the trail to be aligned over it.
- 3.1.4 The South West Coast Path generally follows the coast quite closely over this length apart from at Glenthorne where it currently goes inland for some distance. For the most part we propose adopting the walked line of the South West Coast Path as the line of the England Coast Path. However, there are places where we have proposed improvements to the existing route line (see paragraph 3.1.2) and furthermore there may be places where the walked line differs slightly from the route originally approved by the Secretary of State, as the path has evolved over time to cope with coastal erosion and other processes. In both situations, as explained at part 5a of the

Overview, assuming these proposals are approved we intend to use a separate variation report to the Secretary of State to change the route of the existing national trail to reflect the approved line of the England Coast Path insofar as the two are different.

3.1.5 This part of the coast includes the following sites, designated for nature conservation (see map C of the Overview):

- Exmoor Coastal Heaths Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
- Glenthorne Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

3.1.6 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.

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:**

3.1.7 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 suitable for people with reduced mobility because:

- The trail would follow an uneven grass or bare soil path along most of its length between MCM-3-S002 and MCM-3-S032;
- There are steep gradients in places for example at Culbone Wood where it would be necessary to ascend or descend steep slopes;
- Along the new section of trail between Yenworthy Combe and Handball, at Glenthorne (route sections MCM-3-S011 to MCM-3-S023) the trail follows steep gradients and bare soil paths. The trail would also follow the shingle beach at Glenthorne (route sections MCM-3-S013 and MCM-3-S014) which can be uneven and difficult underfoot and ascend steep steps from the beach between route sections MCM-3-S014 and MCM-3-S015.

3.1.8 The new infrastructure being put in place will form 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:

3.1.9 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 tables 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 below 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'.**

3.1.10 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.

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

3.1.11 Alternative routes: An optional alternative route would operate at times when the beach route along route sections MCM-3-S013 and MCM-3-S014 is unavailable due to high tides. Information boards at the end of route sections MCM-3-S010 and MCM-3-S023 would provide users with up to date information on tide times and the route options available.

3.1.12 The optional alternative route from Yenworthy Combe to Handball (route sections MCM-3-A001 to MCM-3-A006) would follow the existing public footpath (currently used as the route of the South West Coast Path). See map 3d and associated table 3.2.3 below for details. It would not have the effect of creating any additional spreading room on either the seaward or the landward side.

### Establishment and ongoing management of the trail

3.1.13 Where the trail follows the existing South West Coast Path as currently walked and managed, there are no additional measures that we consider necessary to improve the safety or convenience of the trail on this length of coast.

3.1.14 For the new section at Glenthorne (route sections MCM-3-S011 to MCM-3-S023) some physical establishment of the trail would be necessary, in accordance with the general approach described in part 6 of the Overview. This would include the following:

- Installation of a new flight of steps leading up from the beach (between route sections MCM-3-S014 and MCM-3-S015);
- Construction of new steps and provision of safety railings along the existing path at route section MCM-3-S015;
- Creation of a new section of path at route section MCM-3-S018;
- Small scale repairs to the existing revetments along the path (route section MCM-3-S019);
- Scrub clearance along an approximately 700m length of the path at route section MCM-3-S023.

3.1.15 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:**

3.1.16 All 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 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 below for details of the sections that may be affected in the foreseeable future.

3.1.17 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 3.2: Commentary on the maps

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

Table 3.2.1 includes sections of the trail that follow the existing South West Coast Path as currently walked and managed. Table 3.2.2 includes sections of the trail that differ from the existing South West Coast Path.

### 3.2.1 Details for sections that follow the existing South West Coast Path: Maps 3a to 3c, Worthy to Yenworthy Combe and Maps 3e to 3f, Handball to The Foreland

Notes on table:

Column 2 – an asterisk (\*) against the route section number means see also table 3.2.4: Other options considered.

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 3.2.5’ 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
Map(s)	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)
3a	MCM-3-S001	Yes - normal	Track	Clarity and cohesion	None
	MCM-3-S002* to MCM-3-S005*	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
3a & 3b	MCM-3-S006	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
3b	MCM-3-S007	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
3b & 3c	MCM-3-S008	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
3c	MCM-3-S009 and MCM-3-S010*	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
3d	See table 3.2.2 for sections that differ from the existing South West Coast Path				
3e	MCM-3-S024 to MCM-3-S031	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
3f	MCM-3-S032	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None

### 3.2.2 Details for sections that differ from the existing South West Coast Path – Map 3d, Yenworthy Combe to Handball

Notes on table:

Column 2 – an asterisk (\*) against the route section number means see also table 3.2.4: 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 3.2.5’ 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)
3d	MCM-3-S011*	Other existing walked route	Bare soil (compacted)	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	MCM-3-S012*	Other existing walked route	Bare soil (compacted)	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	MCM-3-S013* and MCM-3-S014*	Not an existing walked route	Shingle	Yes – see table 3.2.5	Landward edge of the cliff	Clarity and cohesion	None
	MCM-3-S015*	Not an existing walked route	Bare soil (compacted)	Yes – see table 3.2.5	Path	Clarity and 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)
3d	MCM-3-S016*	Not an existing walked route	Steps: stone	Yes – see table 3.2.5	Path	Clarity and cohesion	None
	MCM-3-S017* to MCM-3-S020*	Not an existing walked route	Bare soil (compacted)	Yes – see table 3.2.5	Path	Clarity and cohesion	None
	MCM-3-S021*	Not an existing walked route	Stone: aggregate	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	MCM-3-S022* and MCM-3-S023*	Not an existing walked route	Bare soil (compacted)	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None

### 3.2.3 Alternative routes and optional route details: Map 3d, Yenworthy Combe to Handball

Notes on table:

By default, the alternative route/optional alternative route will cover the land two metres either side of the approved line for this route. However by virtue of s55D(2) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, where the alternative route/optional alternative route follows an existing path corridor, the trail may adopt a variable width as dictated by existing physical features.

Columns 6a and 6b of this table describe the boundaries of the alternative route strips.

1	2	3	4	5	6a	6b	6c	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)	Seaward boundary of alternative route strip	Landward boundary of alternative route strip (See maps)	Reason for boundary discretion	Proposed exclusions or restrictions (see part 9 of Overview)
3d	MCM-3-A001	Public footpath	Bare soil (compacted)	Yes - normal	Seaward edge of trail	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	MCM-3-A002	Other existing walked route	Bare soil (compacted)	Yes - normal	Seaward edge of trail	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	MCM-3-A003	Public footpath	Bare soil (compacted)	Yes - normal	Seaward edge of trail	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	MCM-3-A004	Public footpath	Stone: aggregate	Yes - normal	Seaward edge of trail	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	MCM-3-A005 and MCM-3-A006	Public footpath	Bare soil (compacted)	Yes - normal	Seaward edge of trail	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None

### 3.2.4 Other options considered: Map 3d, Yenworthy Combe to Handball

Map(s)	Section number(s)	Option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option as the route
3d	MCM-3-S011 and MCM-3-S023	We considered aligning the trail along the existing South West Coast Path to the landward side of Glenthorne.	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ It is closer to the sea and offers a varied and interesting route with extensive views along the coastline. The existing South West Coast Path at its furthest extent is about 800m inland from the coast and due to the wooded nature of the landscape there are no views of the sea;</li> <li>■ The proposal is made with the support of the landowner who is prepared to voluntarily dedicate a suitable permanent route through an excepted area of garden;</li> <li>■ The route currently followed by the existing South West Coast Path can still be used for anyone not wishing to follow the more seaward route or unable to use this route due to high tides;</li> <li>■ 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.</li> </ul>
3a & 3c	MCM-3-S002 to MCM-3-S004 and MCM-3-S010	We considered aligning the trail seaward of the existing South West Coast Path through Yearnor and Yenworthy Woods.	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The steep gradient and unstable nature of some of the terrain is not suitable to form part of the designated trail;</li> <li>■ Under our proposals, these areas would be available for people to use as part of the spreading room.</li> </ul>

### 3.2.5 Roll-back implementation – more complex situations: map 3d, Yenworthy Combe to Handball

Map(s)	Section numbers(s)	Feature or site potentially affected	How we will manage roll-back in relation to this feature or site
	MCM-3-S013 to MCM-3-S020	Glenthorne	If it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of any excepted land (e.g. buildings, curtilage, gardens etc) at Glenthorne, we will choose a route landward of it, following discussions with the 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 3.3: Chapter 3 - Formal Proposals

- Below are our formal proposals to the Secretary of State for the length of coast shown on maps 3a to 3f.
- They should be read in conjunction with the relevant maps.
- The commentary above explains the practical effect of these proposals.

### Formal Proposals – Worthy to The Foreland

#### Proposed route of the trail

- 3.3.1 In relation to route sections MCM-3-S001 to MCM-3-S032, and MCM-3-A001 to MCM-3-A006 the route, as initially determined at the time the report was prepared, is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps 3a to 3f as the proposed route of the trail.
- 3.3.2 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

- 3.3.3 Adjacent to route sections MCM-3-S001, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the track shown as the trail on map 3a.
- 3.3.4 Adjacent to route sections MCM-3-S013 and MCM-3-S014, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the cliff, shown as the trail on map 3d.
- 3.3.5 Adjacent to route sections MCM-3-S015 to MCM-3-S020, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the path, shown as the trail on map 3d.

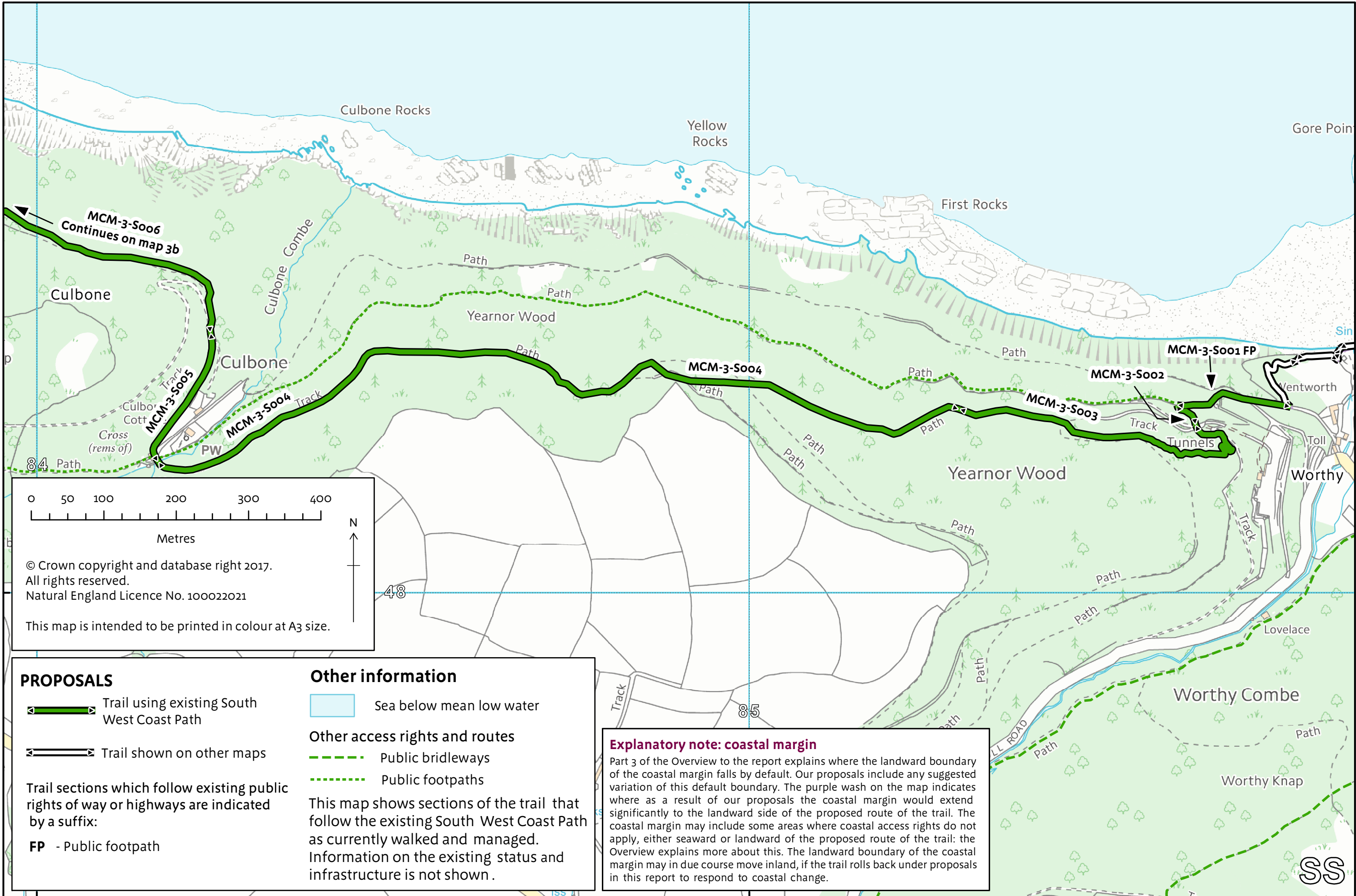
#### Local restrictions and exclusions

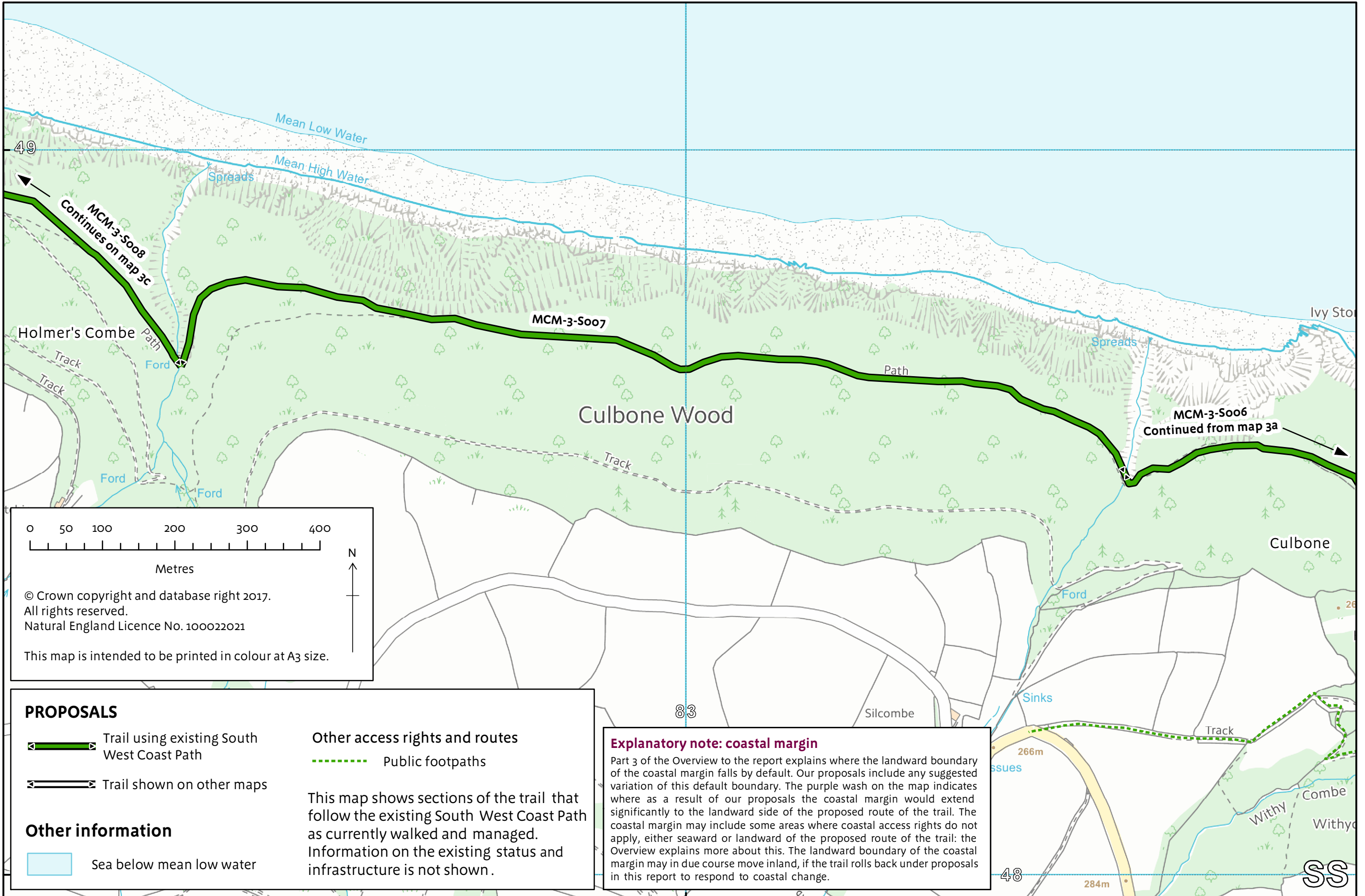
- 3.3.6 At the time of writing this report, there are no proposals for local restrictions or exclusions in relation to this length of coast.

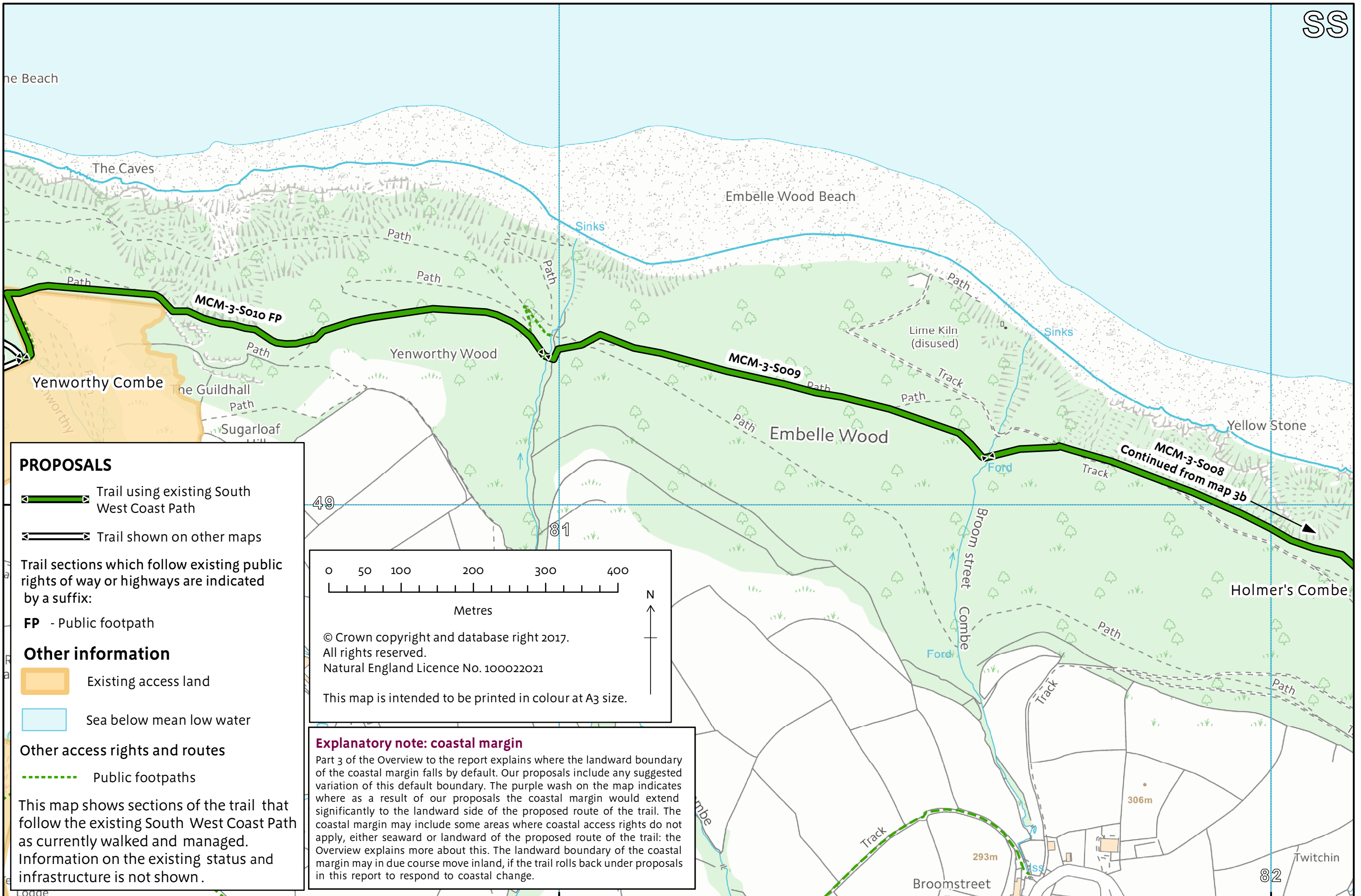
#### Alternative routes

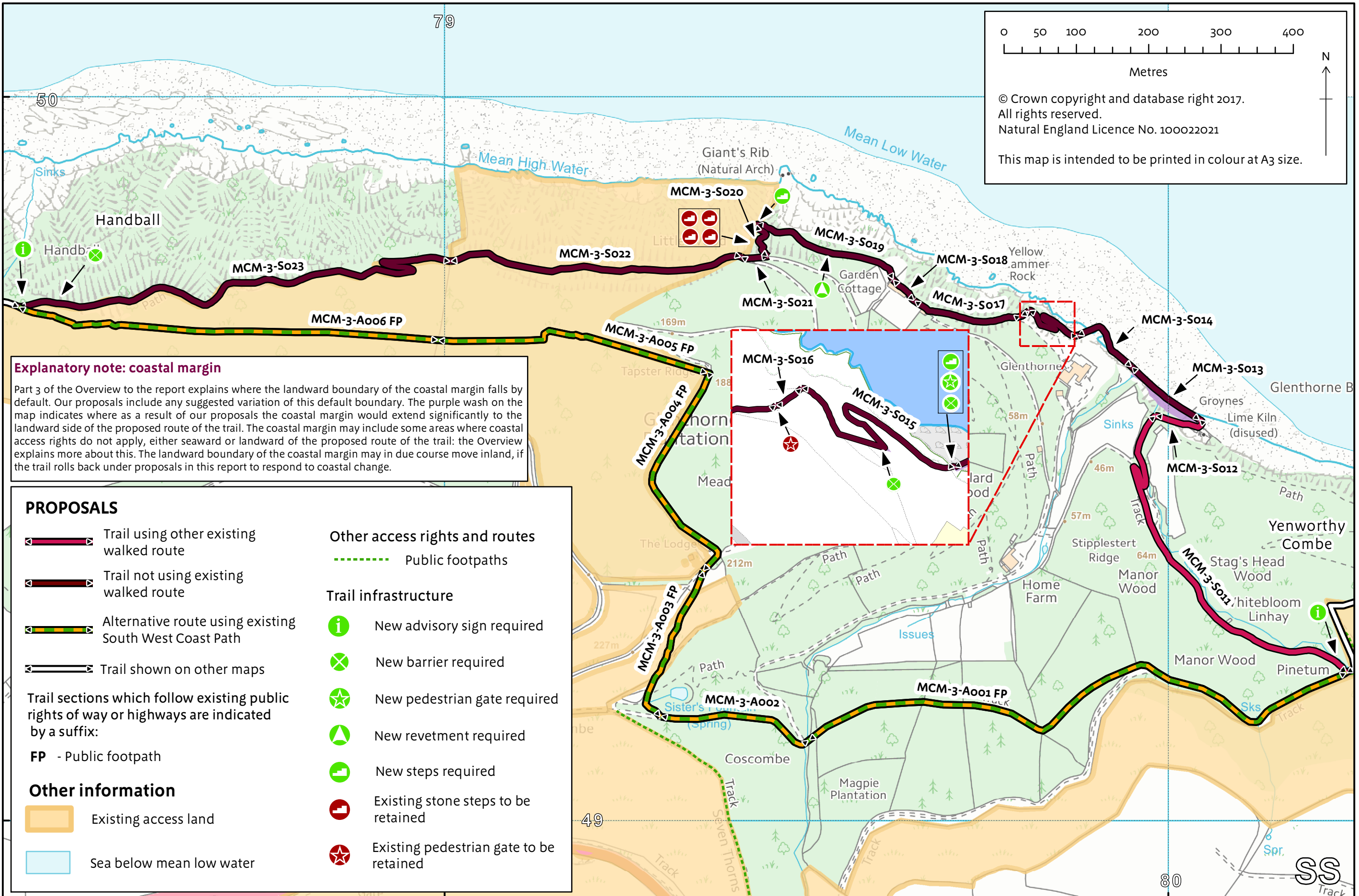
- 3.3.7 An optional alternative route is to operate as a diversion from the ordinary route between route sections MCM-3-S013 and MCM-3-S014 at times that it is unavailable due to high tides. The optional alternative route is to be at the centre of the line shown as route sections MCM-3-A001 to MCM-3-A006 on map 3d.
- 3.3.8 Adjacent to route sections MCM-3-A001 to MCM-3-A006, the landward and seaward boundaries of the optional alternative route strip are to correspond to the landward and seaward edge of the trail, shown on map 3d.

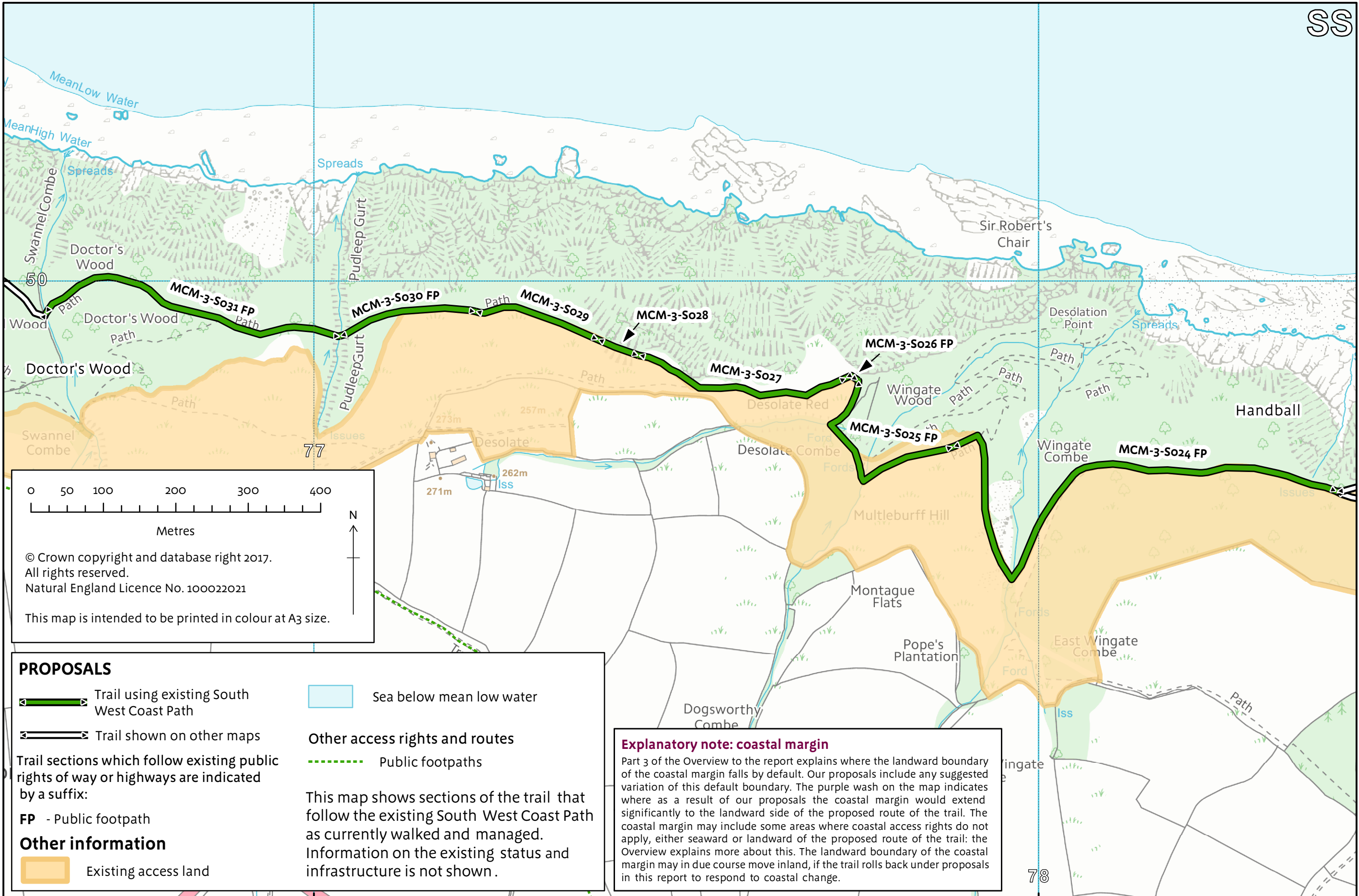












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This map is intended to be printed in colour at A3 size.

**PROPOSALS**

- Trail using existing South West Coast Path
- Trail shown on other maps

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

**FP** - Public footpath

**Other information**

- Existing access land

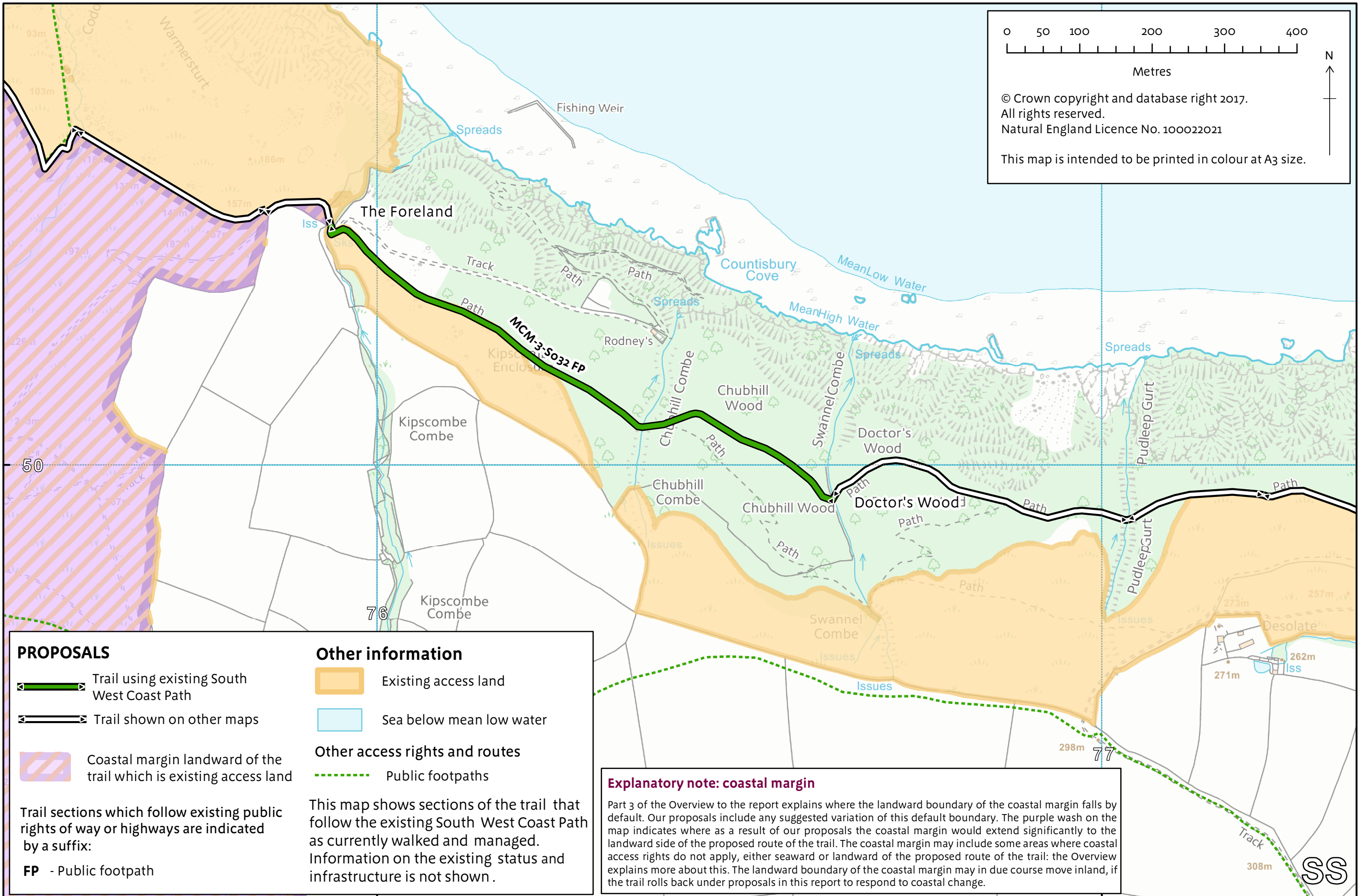
**Other access rights and routes**

- 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.

**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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**PROPOSALS**

- Trail using existing South West Coast Path
- Trail shown on other maps
- Coastal margin landward of the trail which is existing access land

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

**FP** - Public footpath

**Other information**

- Existing access land
- 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.

**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.