

## Chapter 1:

# Maldon to Heybridge Basin

England Coast Path: Maldon to Salcott - Natural England's Proposals

## Part 1.1: Introduction

<b>Start Point:</b>	<b>Maldon (Promenade Park)</b> (grid reference: TL8622 0654)
<b>End Point:</b>	<b>Heybridge Basin</b> (grid reference: TL8717 0682)
<b>Relevant Maps:</b>	<b>1a to 1c</b>

### Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps:

#### The Trail:

- 1.1.1 Generally follows existing walked routes, including public rights of way, along most of this length.
- 1.1.2 Mainly follows the coastline quite closely and maintains good views of the sea.
- 1.1.3 This part of the coast includes the following sites, designated for nature conservation or heritage preservation (See map C of the Overview):
  - Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
  - Blackwater Estuary (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 4) Special Protection Area (SPA)
  - Blackwater Estuary (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 4) Ramsar site
  - Blackwater Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its wildlife and habitat interests
  - Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Colne Estuaries Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)

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.

- 1.1.4 After advice from specialists we have concluded that our proposals would not be likely to have any significant impact on these features. We have identified a requirement to provide appropriate signage at key locations to explain the importance of these habitats, to encourage people to stay

on the trail and to keep dogs under effective control in preventing disturbance to wildlife. This is explained further in Parts 5 & 9 of the Overview.

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 - 'Protection of sensitive features'- for more information.**

### **Accessibility:**

1.1.5 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 surface of the trail is uneven or narrow on parts of the sea wall footpath from MSC-1-S035 to MSC-1-S037, for example from Bates Road through to the EA sluice crossing at Heybridge Creek (close to Battle Rise).
- At Downs Road recreation ground it would be necessary to ascend/descend steps at (the junction of) section(s) MSC-1-S012 to MSC-1-S013. An alternative option is to use the pavement opposite.
- At Heybridge Basin the crossing of the sea lock involves steps up/down across the lock gate at the junction of sections MSC-1-S042 and MSC-2-S001.

**See Part 5a of the Overview - 'Recreational issues' - for more information.**

### **Where we have proposed exercising our discretion:**

The discretion referred to below is explained in more detail in the Overview.

1.1.6 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 1.2.1 below.

1.1.7 We have used our discretion not to include land to the landward side of sections MSC-1-S035 to MSC-1-S040 in the coastal margin. These sections are sea walls, the landward edge of which would normally form part of the landward coastal margin by default. However, in this location we have proposed aligning the landward extent of the margin to the landward edge of the top of the sea wall in order to make the extent of people's rights clearer and more cohesive on the ground. In particular:

- The landward edge of the aligned path on the top of the sea wall presents an easily identifiable line for users to follow, while;
- The landward face of the sea wall varies in profile and in places merges directly into land without coastal access rights with the effect of making the landward extent of the default coastal margin unclear.

**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'.**

1.1.8 Restrictions and/or exclusions: We have proposed to exclude access by direction under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) in places along this section of coast. For details of these directions, see 1.3.6 in the Formal Proposals Section of this report and Part 9 of the Overview.

1.1.9 This direction will not prevent or affect:

- Any other use people already make of the land locally by formal agreement with the landowner, or by informal permission or traditional toleration.

1.1.10 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.**

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

1.1.11 Some physical establishment of the trail would be necessary, in accordance with the general approach described in Part 6 the Overview:

- A new interpretation panel will be added at section MSC-1-S001; and
- Surface improvement is likely to be needed on some sections of the trail to enhance its durability and convenience, for example on route sections MSC-1-S035 and MSC-1-S036.

1.1.12 Ongoing management and maintenance would be necessary in accordance with the general approach described in Part 7 of the Overview.

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

### **Future Change:**

1.1.13 At the time of preparing this report, there is one location off Station Road, Fullbridge (known as Sadd's Wharf) (route sections MSC-1-S024 to MSC-1-S037) where we foresee a future opportunity to improve access provision. The land in question has planning consent from Maldon District Council for redevelopment which could include a riverside walk to improve the overall accessibility and continuity of the trail around Heybridge Creek. In such circumstances the alignment of the England Coast Path would be reviewed and any resulting proposals to change the alignment of the trail would require the submission of a variation report to the Secretary of State.

**See Parts 5f - '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 1c: Maldon to Heybridge Basin

Notes on table:

Column 2 – an asterisk (\*) against the route section number means see also table 1.2.2: Other options considered.

Column 7 – all sections are subject to a s25A CROW direction (year round) in the coastal margin for the purpose of excluding access to salt marsh and mudflat on grounds of unsuitability for public access.

1	2	3	4	5	6a	6b	7
Maps	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	MSC-1-S001	Public footpath	Concrete	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	MSC-1-S002	Other existing walked route	Concrete	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	MSC-1-S003	Other existing walked route	Tarmac	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	MSC-1-S004	Multi-use route	Concrete	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	MSC-1-S005	Public highway	Tarmac	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	MSC-1-S006	Public footway (pavement)	Tarmac	No	Various	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	MSC-1-S007 & MSC-1-S008	Public highway	Tarmac	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	MSC-1-S009	Public footway (pavement)	Tarmac	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	MSC-1-S010	Public highway	Tarmac	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	MSC-1-S011	Public footway (pavement)	Tarmac	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	MSC-1-S012	Other existing walked route	Gravel	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	MSC-1-S013	Public highway	Tarmac	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	MSC-1-S014	Public footway (pavement)	Tarmac	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	MSC-1-S015	Public highway	Tarmac	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	MSC-1-S016	Public footpath	Concrete	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	MSC-1-S017	Public footpath	Tarmac	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	MSC-1-S018	Public footpath	Block paving	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	MSC-1-S019 & MSC-1-S020	Public footpath	Tarmac	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	MSC-1-S021	Public footpath	Tarmac	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	MSC-1-S022	Public footway (pavement)	Tarmac	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin

1	2	3	4	5	6a	6b	7
Maps	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	MSC-1-S023	Public highway	Tarmac	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
1b	MSC-1-S024*	Public footway (pavement)	Tarmac	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	MSC-1-S025*	Public highway	Tarmac	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	MSC-1-S026*	Public footway (pavement)	Tarmac	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	MSC-1-S027*	Public highway	Tarmac	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	MSC-1-S028*	Public footway (pavement)	Tarmac	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	MSC-1-S029*	Public highway	Tarmac	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	MSC-1-S030* & MSC-1-S031*	Public footway (pavement)	Tarmac	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	MSC-1-S032*	Public highway	Tarmac	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	MSC-1-S033*	Public footway (pavement)	Tarmac	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	MSC-1-S034*	Multi-use route	Concrete	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	MSC-1-S035* & MSC-1-S036*	Public footpath	Bare soil: Compacted	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	MSC-1-S037* & MSC-1-S038*	Public footpath	Grass	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	1b & 1c	MSC-1-S039	Public footpath	Bare soil: Compacted	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion
1c	MSC-1-S040	Public footpath	Gravel	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	MSC-1-S041	Public footway (pavement)	Steps: Stone	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	MSC-1-S042	Public footpath	Gravel	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin

### 1.2.2 Other options considered – Maps 1a to 1c: Maldon to Heybridge Basin

Map(s)	Section number(s)	Option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option as the route
1b	MSC-1-S024 to MSC-1-S038	<p>We considered aligning the route from Fullbridge (Maldon) to Battle Rise (Heybridge) along the existing public rights of way that run along the sea wall crest upstream and then follows the Chelmer &amp; Blackwater Navigation towpath towards Heybridge Basin (as shown on map 1b). The main strength of this option is that it provides a pleasant green walking corridor away from the built-up area of The Causeway.</p> <p>No other options were identified for the trail in relation to this map.</p>	<p>We opted for the proposed route because it is closer to the estuary and provides minimum interruption to the route's continuity. 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.</p> <p>The option can be used as an informal link to the route but will not form part of these proposals.</p>

## 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 1c.
- They should be read in conjunction with the relevant maps.
- The commentary above explains the practical effect of these proposals.

### Formal Proposals – Maldon to Heybridge Basin

#### Proposed route of the trail

1.3.1 The route is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps 1a to 1c as the proposed route of the trail.

#### Landward boundary of coastal margin

- 1.3.2 Adjacent to route sections MSC-1-S002, MSC-1-S009, MSC-1-S011, MSC-1-S014, MSC-1-S023, MSC-1-S024, MSC-1-S026, MSC-1-S028, MSC-1-S030, MSC-1-S031 and MSC-1-S033, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the pavement shown as the trail on maps 1a and 1b.
- 1.3.3 Adjacent to route section MSC-1-S006, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with various other features shown as the trail on map 1a.
- 1.3.4 Adjacent to route sections MSC-1-S016, MSC-1-S017, MSC-1-S019 and MSC-1-S020, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the existing fence line which is landward of the public footpath shown as the trail on map 1a.
- 1.3.5 Adjacent to route sections MSC-1-S035 to MSC-1-S040, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the top of the sea wall shown as the trail on maps 1b and 1c.

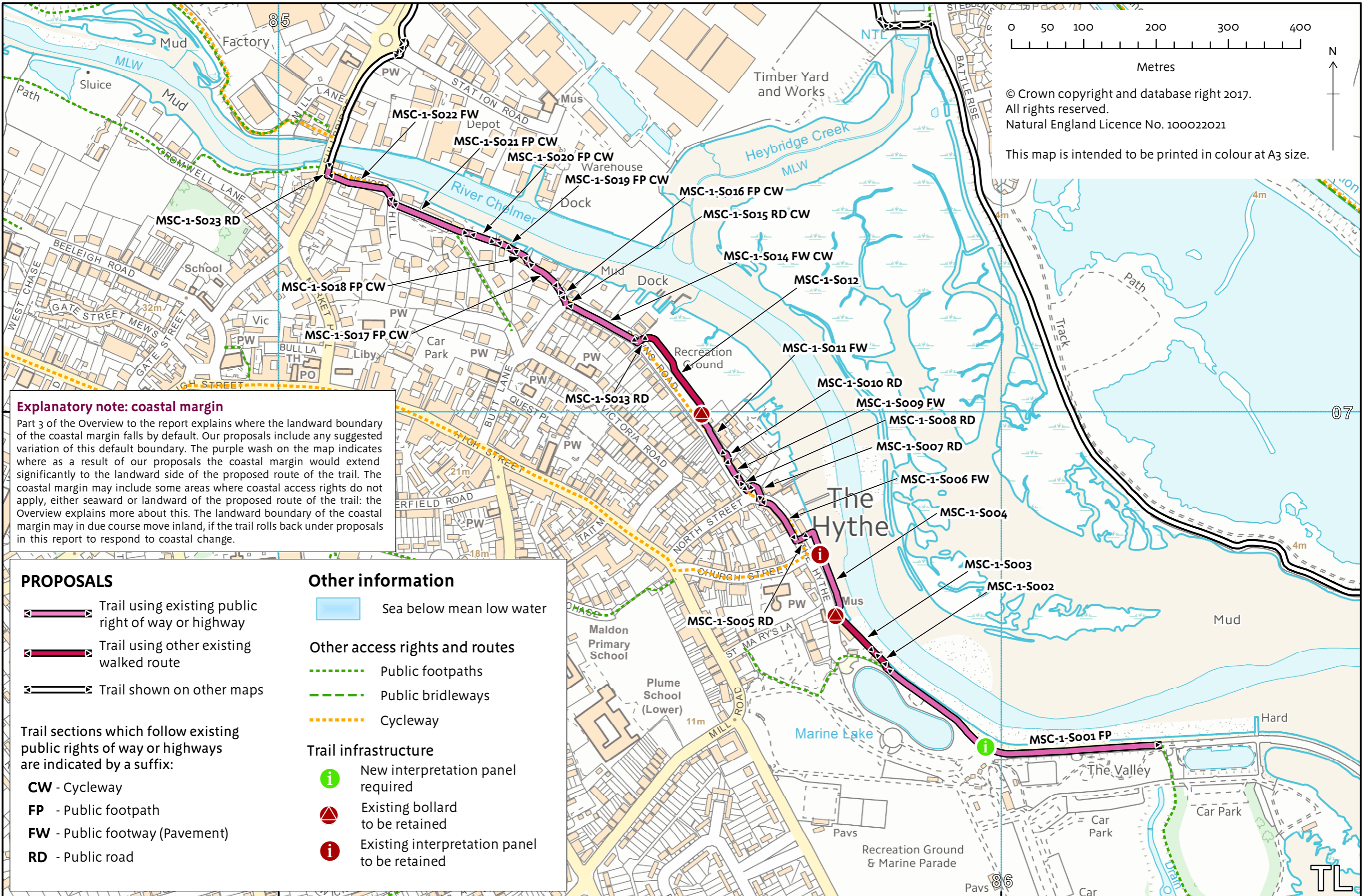
#### Local restrictions and exclusions

- 1.3.6 Natural England proposes to exclude access relevant to this length of coast, as follows:
- Access is to be excluded all year-round to all areas of intertidal mudflats and salt marsh on this length of coast, adjacent to route sections MSC-1-S001 to MSC-1-S042. This exclusion is proposed under s25A of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) as the land is unsuitable for public access. This exclusion will not affect the route itself. See map F in the Overview for details.

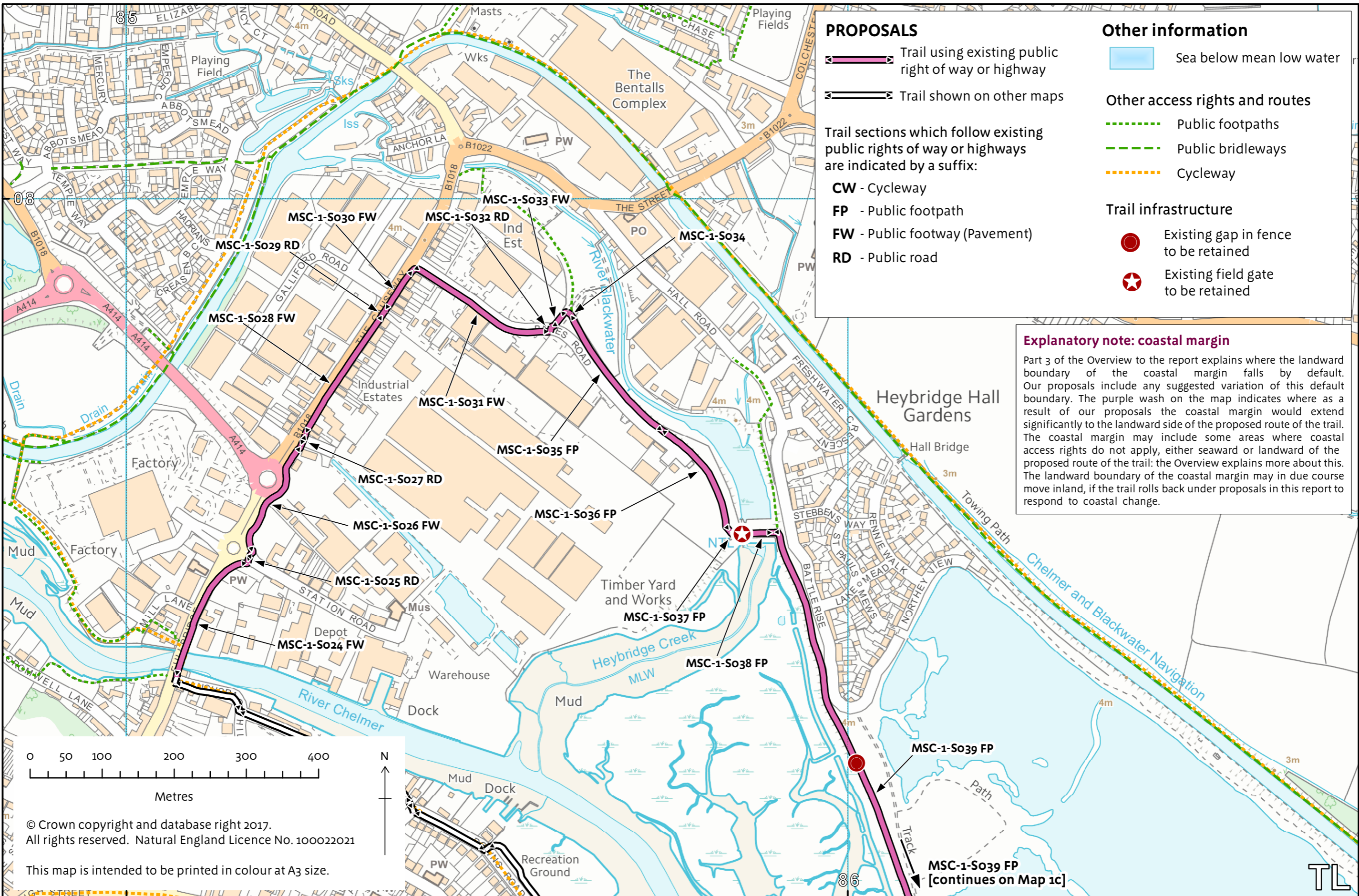
**See Part 9 of the Overview – ‘Restrictions and exclusions’ - for further details.**

#### Alternative routes

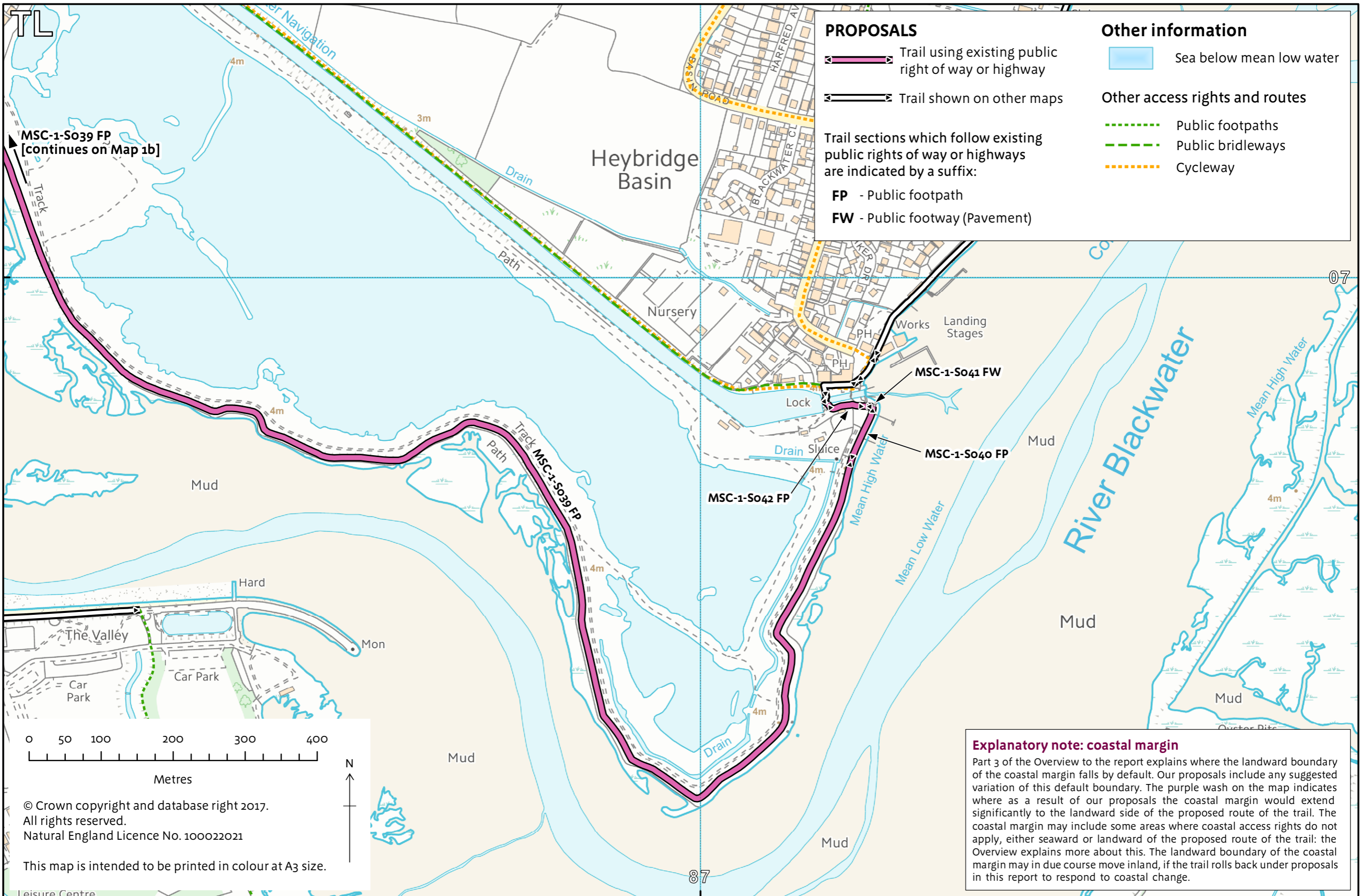
1.3.7 There are no proposals for alternative routes in relation to this length of coast.



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 Metres

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