

Chapter 4:

Tollesbury Wick Marshes to Old Hall Marshes

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

Part 4.1: Introduction

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Start Point: | Tollesbury Wick Marshes (grid reference: TL9679 0932) |
| End Point: | Old Hall Marshes (grid reference: TL9589 1218) |
| Relevant Maps: | 4a to 4d |

Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps:

The Trail:

- 4.1.1 Generally follows existing walked routes, including public rights of way, along most of this length.
- 4.1.2 Mainly follows the coastline closely and maintains good views of the sea.
- 4.1.3 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 Estuary National Nature Reserve (NNR)
 - Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Colne Estuaries Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)
 - Coastal fish weir at the northern end of The Nass (Scheduled Monument 1019581) (SAM)

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.

- 4.1.4 After advice from specialists we have concluded that our proposals would not be likely to have any significant impact on these features. In reaching this conclusion 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 help prevent dogs from disturbing wildlife.
- 4.1.5 We have also proposed a seasonal exclusion affecting the coastal margin in the vicinity of Shinglehead Point at Tollesbury Wick Marshes to avoid disturbance to ground-nesting birds and trampling of sensitive vegetation. This exclusion will not affect the trail itself. 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:

- 4.1.6 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 surface of the trail is uneven, muddy or narrow on parts of the sea wall footpath, for example between route sections MSC-4-S010 to MSC-4-S014.
- There are steps at Woodrolfe Hard EA Floodgate, route section MSC-4-S009, where it would be necessary to descend or ascend steps.
- There is a pair of close-parallel gates (narrow chicane) close to Guisnes Court EA Sluice, at the junction of route sections MSC-4-S017 and MSC-4-S018.

- 4.1.7 Any existing barriers to accessibility will be replaced with kissing gates or pedestrian gates, so as to make them 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 discretion referred to below is explained in more detail in the Overview.

- 4.1.8 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 4.2.1 below.
- 4.1.9 We have used our discretion not to include land to the landward side of route sections MSC-4-S001 and MSC-4-S010 to MSC-4-S018 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 the folding field 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'.

4.1.10 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 4.3.4 in the Formal Proposals Section of this report and Part 9 of the Overview.

4.1.11 These directions will not prevent or affect:

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

4.1.12 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

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

- New interpretation panels will be added at route section MSC-4-S001 and at the junction of route sections MSC-4-S012 and MSC-4-S013;
- A new pedestrian gate will be added at the junction of route sections MSC-4-S017 and MSC-4-S018; and
- Surface improvement is likely to be needed on some sections of the trail to enhance its durability and convenience, for example between route sections MSC-4-S010 and MSC-4-S014.

4.1.14 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:

4.1.15 At the time of preparing the report, we do not foresee any 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 4.2: Commentary on Maps

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

4.2.1 Section Details – Maps 4a to 4d: Tollesbury Wick Marshes to Old Hall Marshes

Notes on table:

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) |
| 4a to 4c | MSC-4-S001 | Public footpath | Grass | No | Landward edge of top of sea wall | Clarity and cohesion | Margin |
| 4c | MSC-4-S002 & MSC-4-S003 | Public footpath | Gravel | No | Landward edge of trail | Not used | Margin |
| | MSC-4-S004 | Private Road | Gravel | No | Landward edge of trail | Not used | Margin |
| | MSC-4-S005 | Public footpath | Gravel | No | Fence line | Clarity and cohesion | Margin |
| | MSC-4-S006 | Private Road | Gravel | No | Landward edge of trail | Not used | Margin |
| | MSC-4-S007 | Public footpath | Gravel | No | Fence line | Clarity and cohesion | Margin |
| | MSC-4-S008 | Public footpath | Steps: Concrete | No | Landward edge of trail | Not used | Margin |
| | MSC-4-S009 | Public highway | Tarmac | No | Landward edge of trail | Not used | Margin |
| | MSC-4-S010 | Public footpath | Gravel | No | Landward edge of top of sea wall | Clarity and cohesion | Margin |
| | MSC-4-S011 | Public footpath | Grass | No | Landward edge of top of sea wall | Clarity and cohesion | Margin |
| | MSC-4-S012 | Public footpath | Bare soil: Compacted | No | Landward edge of top of sea wall | Clarity and cohesion | Margin |
| 4d | MSC-4-S013 | Public footpath | Gravel | No | Landward edge of top of sea wall | Clarity and cohesion | Margin |
| | MSC-4-S014 | Public footpath | Bare soil: Compacted | No | Landward edge of top of sea wall | Clarity and cohesion | Margin |
| | MSC-4-S015 & MSC-4-S016 | Public footpath | Grass | No | Landward edge of top of sea wall | Clarity and cohesion | Margin |
| | MSC-4-S017 | Other existing walked route | Grass | No | Landward edge of top of sea wall | Clarity and cohesion | Margin |
| | MSC-4-S018 | Public footpath | Grass | No | Landward edge of top of sea wall | Clarity and cohesion | Margin |

Part 4.3: Chapter 4 - Formal Proposals

- Below are our formal proposals to the Secretary of State for the length of coast shown on maps 4a to 4d.
- They should be read in conjunction with the relevant maps.
- The commentary above explains the practical effect of these proposals.

Formal Proposals – Tollesbury Wick Marshes to Old Hall Marshes

Proposed route of the trail

4.3.1 The route is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps 4a to 4d as the proposed route of the trail.

Landward boundary of coastal margin

4.3.2 Adjacent to route sections MSC-4-S001, MSC-4-S010 to MSC-4-S018, 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 4a to 4d.

4.3.3 Adjacent to route sections MSC-4-S005 and MSC-4-S007, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the fence which is landward of the public footpath shown as the trail on map 4c.

Local restrictions and exclusions

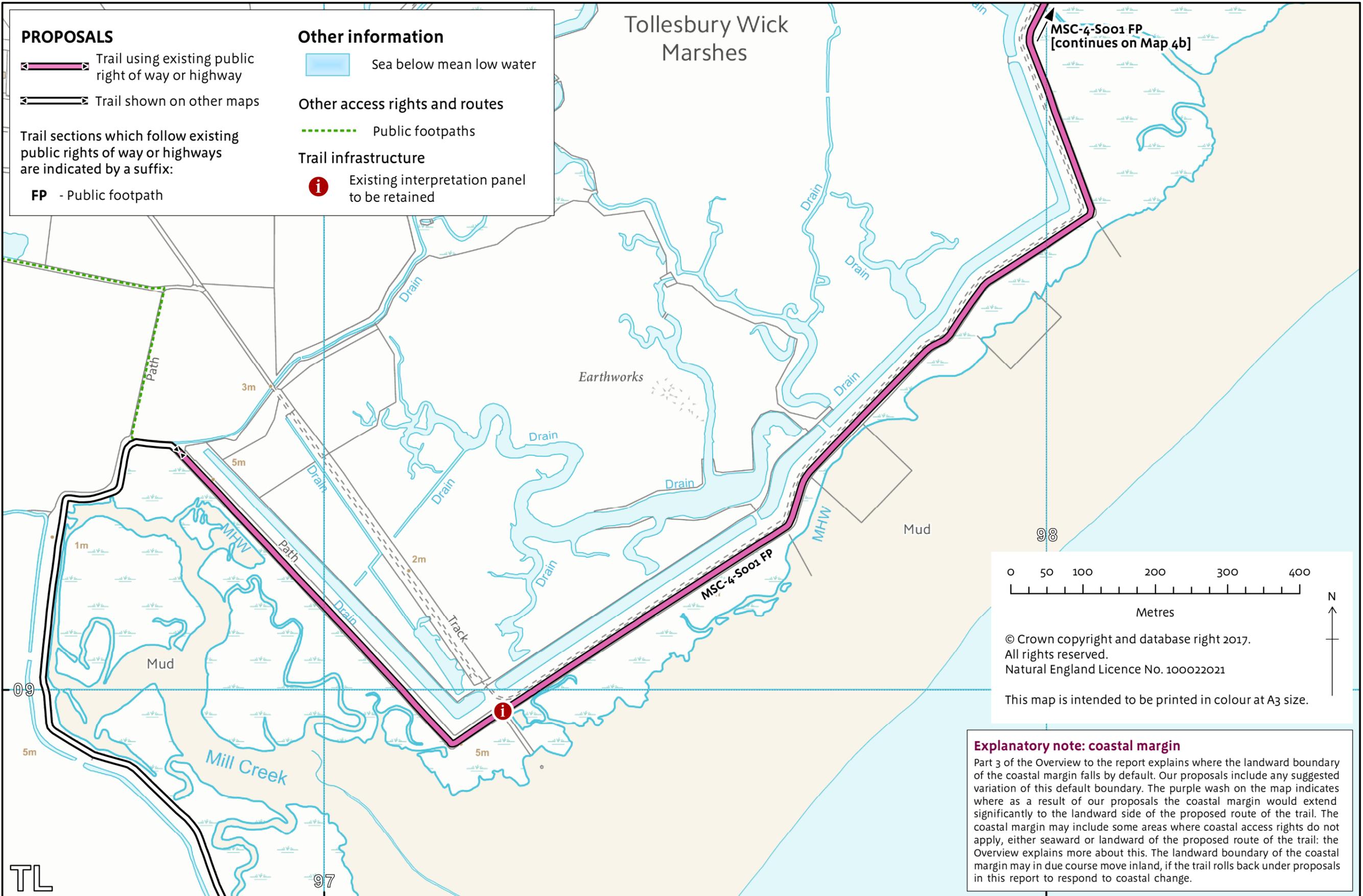
4.3.4 Natural England proposes to exclude access relevant to this length of coast, as follows:

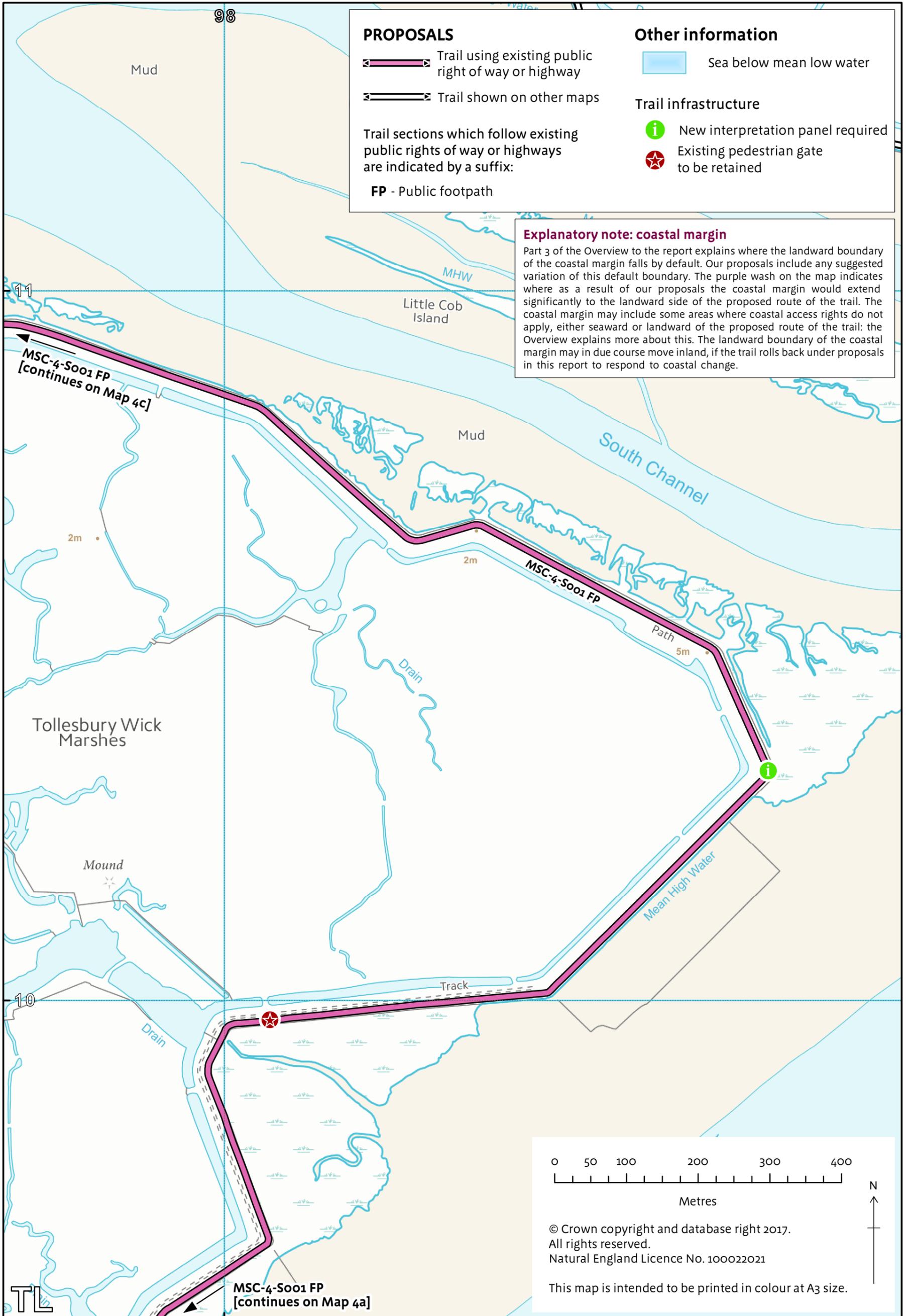
- Access is to be excluded all year-round to all areas of intertidal mudflats and salt marsh on this length of coast, adjacent to route sections MSC-4-S001 to MSC-4-S018. This exclusion is proposed under s25A of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) as the land is unsuitable for public access. This exclusion will not affect the route itself. See maps K and L in the Overview for details.
- Access is to be excluded from 1st May to 15th August each year in the coastal margin on the shingle spits at Tollesbury Wick Marshes adjacent to route section MSC-4-S001. This is proposed under s26(3)(a) of the Act and supports current management for the Essex Wildlife Trust nature reserve as it will prevent impact through trampling and direct disturbance of bird nesting sites during the breeding season. Interpretation panels will be installed to explain the need for this. This exclusion will not affect the route itself. See map O in the Overview for details.

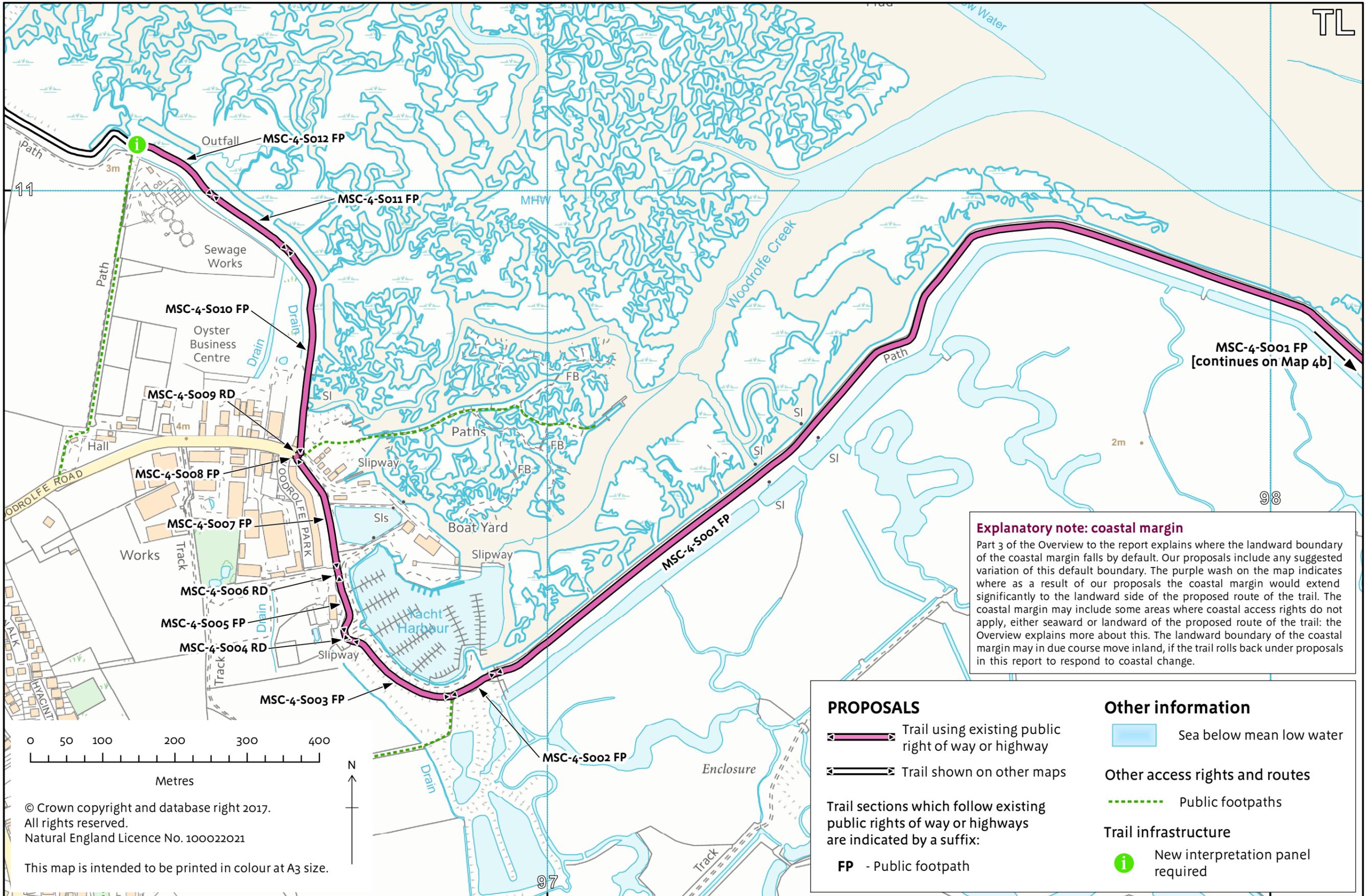
See Part 9 of the Overview – ‘Restrictions and exclusions’ - for further details.

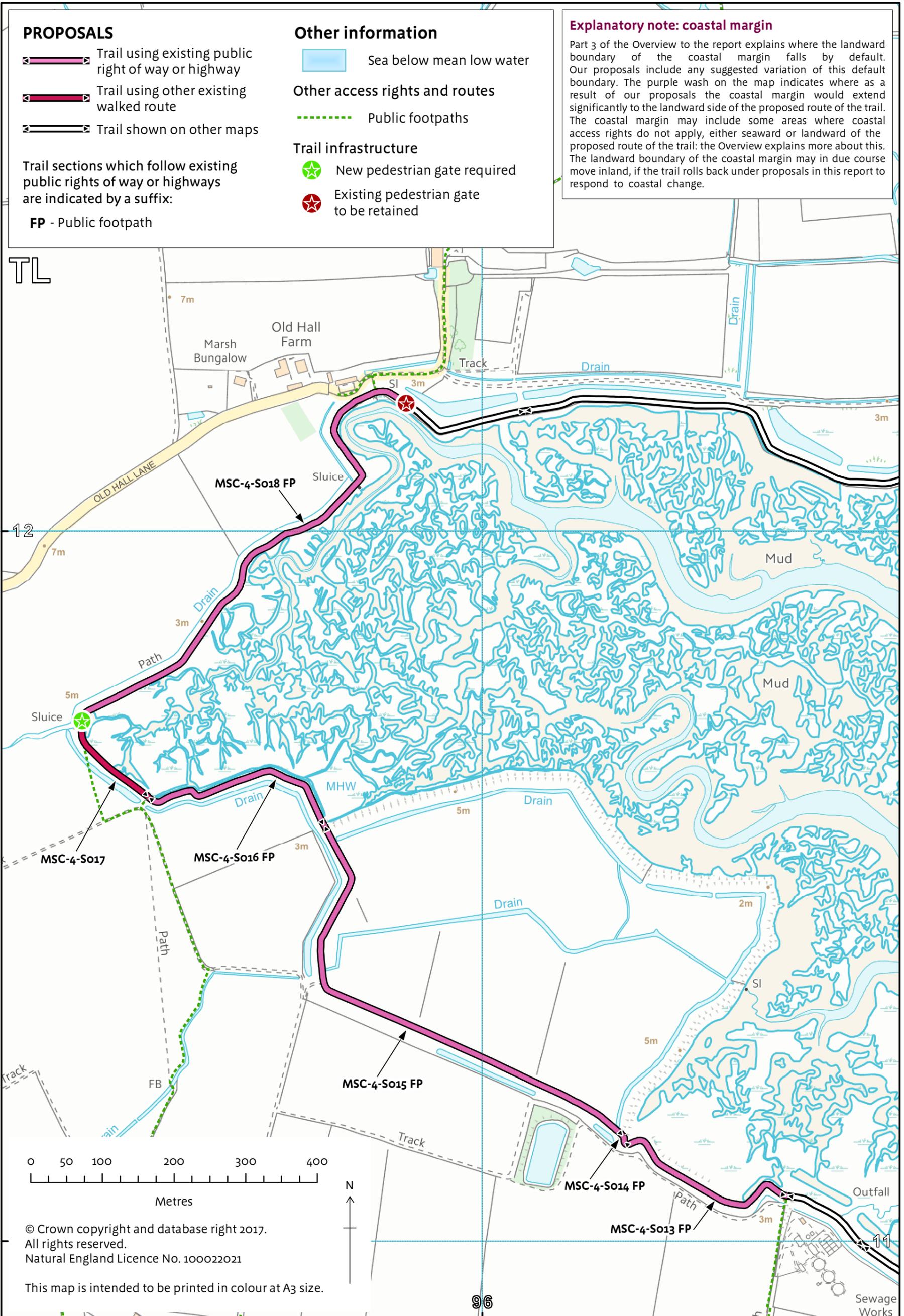
Alternative routes

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









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