

Chapter 9:

Axe Estuary to Lyme Regis

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

Part 9.1: Introduction

Start Point:	Axe Estuary (grid reference: SY 2526 8997)
End Point:	Lyme Regis (grid reference: SY 3381 9164)
Relevant Maps:	9a to 9e

Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps:

The Trail:

- 9.1.1 Follows the existing South West Coast Path as currently walked and managed between the Axe Estuary and Lyme Regis (route sections KLR-9-S001 to KLR-9-S091). The South West Coast Path mainly follows public rights of way along this length.
- 9.1.2 Provides views of the sea at some points, generally towards each end of this section at Axmouth and Lyme Regis. The majority of the route passes through the Axmouth to Lyme Regis Undercliffs National Nature Reserve, an active coastal landslip system, where there are limited sea views.
- 9.1.3 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.
- 9.1.4 This part of the coast includes the following sites, designated for nature conservation or heritage preservation (See map C of the Overview):
- Sidmouth to West Bay Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
 - Lyme Bay and Torbay Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
 - Axmouth to Lyme Regis Undercliffs Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

- West Dorset Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Axmouth to Lyme Regis Undercliffs National Nature Reserve (NNR)

9.1.5 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 ‘Protection of sensitive features’ for more information.

Accessibility:

9.1.6 The proposed route makes use of existing surface paths wherever these meet the criteria in the Coastal Access Scheme.

However, much of the route between Axmouth and Lyme Regis is not suitable for people with reduced mobility because:

- The trail follows an uneven grass or bare soil path along most sections of this stretch, particularly in the Undercliffs NNR;
- There are steps in places along the trail where it would be necessary to ascend/descend, particularly in the Undercliffs NNR and near to Lyme Regis;
- There are kissing gates at the entrances to the National Trust land to the west of Lyme Regis (Ware Lane).

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.

9.1.7 Estuary: The report proposes that the trail should extend upstream from the open coast a short distance as far as Axmouth Bridge, which is the first public foot crossing point over the river. The trail covered by this chapter includes part of this estuary route.

9.1.8 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 9.2.1 below.

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’.

9.1.9 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

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

9.1.11 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:

9.1.12 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 9.2.1 below for details of the sections likely to be affected in the foreseeable future.

9.1.13 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 5f - 'Coastal processes' and 8 - 'Future changes' of the Overview for more information.

Part 9.2: Commentary on Maps

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

9.2.1 Section Details – Maps 9a to 9e: Axe Estuary to Lyme Regis

Notes on table:

Column 2 – an asterisk (*) against the route section number means see also table 9.2.2: 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.

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)	
9a	KLR-9-S001*	No	Path	Clarity and cohesion	None	
	KLR-9-S002*	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	None	
	KLR-9-S003* to KLR-9-S005*	No	Path	Clarity and cohesion	None	
	KLR-9-S006*	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None	
	KLR-9-S007* to KLR-9-S009*	No	Hedge bank	Clarity and cohesion	None	
	KLR-9-S010*	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None	
	KLR-9-S011* to KLR-9-S013*	Yes - Normal	Hedgerow	Clarity and cohesion	None	
	KLR-9-S014* to KLR-9-S015	Yes - Normal	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	None	
	9b	KLR-9-S016 to KLR-9-S018	Yes - Normal	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	None
		KLR-9-S019 to KLR-9-S035	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of cliff	Not used	None
9b & 9c	KLR-9-S036	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of cliff	Not used	None	
9c	KLR-9-S037 to KLR-9-S040	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of cliff	Not used	None	
	KLR-9-S041 to KLR-9-S046	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None	
	KLR-9-S047 to KLR-9-S060	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of cliff	Not used	None	
9d	KLR-9-S061 to KLR-9-S075	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of cliff	Not used	None	
	KLR-9-S076 to KLR-9-S083	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of cliff	Not used	None	
9e	KLR-9-S084	Yes - Normal	Hedgerow	Clarity and cohesion	None	
	KLR-9-S085 to KLR-9-S086	Yes - Normal	Tree line	Clarity and cohesion	None	
	KLR-9-S087	No	Tree line	Clarity and cohesion	None	
	KLR-9-S088	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None	
	KLR-9-S089	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	None	
	KLR-9-S090 to KLR-9-S091	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None	

9.2.2 Other options considered: Map 9a: Axmouth Bridge to Bindon Cliffs

Map(s)	Section number(s)	Option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option as the route
9a	KLR-9-S001 to KLR-9-S014	We considered aligning the trail along Axmouth Harbour and up the cliff side into the Undercliffs NNR.	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the route up the cliff is exceptionally steep and would require significant works to install suitable steps ■ there would be significant issues around the stability of any structure on such a steep slope ■ the onward route through the Undercliffs would pass through an area of active landslips (boulder field) with associated public safety concerns ■ under our proposals, the public footpath along the harbour would remain available for people to use as part of the spreading room, but would not form part of the designated trail ■ 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
	KLR-9-S001 to KLR-9-S004	We considered aligning the trail behind Axmouth Harbour and through the woodland and then dropping down into the Undercliffs NNR.	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ significant additional sea views would not be offered when walking through the woodland. ■ the onward route through the Undercliffs would pass through an area of active landslips (boulder field) with associated public safety concerns ■ 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
	KLR-9-S003 to KLR-9-S010	We considered aligning the trail along the clifftop seaward of the golf course.	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the narrow and erodible strip of land available to walk on was not suitable for the trail ■ a clifftop route would run very close and parallel to fairways for significant distances ■ 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
	KLR-9-S007 to KLR-9-S010	We considered another route through the golf course using an existing access track.	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the access track considered crosses a number of fairways and runs very close to one of the holes ■ 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

Part 9.3: Chapter 9 - Formal Proposals

- Below are our formal proposals to the Secretary of State for the length of coast shown on maps 9a to 9e.
- They should be read in conjunction with the relevant maps.
- The commentary above explains the practical effect of these proposals.

Formal Proposals – Axe Estuary to Lyme Regis

Discretion to include an estuary

9.3.1 Natural England proposes to exercise its functions as if the sea included the estuarial waters of the River Axe as far as Axmouth Bridge as indicated by the extent of the trail shown on map 9a.

Proposed route of the trail

9.3.2 In relation to route sections KLR-9-S001 to KLR-9-S010, and KLR-9-S087 to KLR-9-S091, the route is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps 9a and 9e as the proposed route of the trail.

9.3.3 In relation to route sections KLR-9-S011 to KLR-9-S086, the route, as initially determined at the time the report was prepared, is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps 9a to 9e as the proposed route of the trail.

9.3.4 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

9.3.5 Adjacent to route sections KLR-9-S007 to KLR-9-S009, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the hedge bank which at the time of writing this report is at the landward edge of the trail shown on map 9a.

9.3.6 Adjacent to route sections KLR-9-S011 to KLR-9-S013 and KLR-9-S084, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the hedgerow which at the time of writing this report is at the landward edge of the trail shown on maps 9a and 9e.

9.3.7 Adjacent to route sections KLR-9-S014 to KLR-9-S018, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the fence line which at the time of writing this report is at the landward edge of the trail shown on maps 9a and 9b.

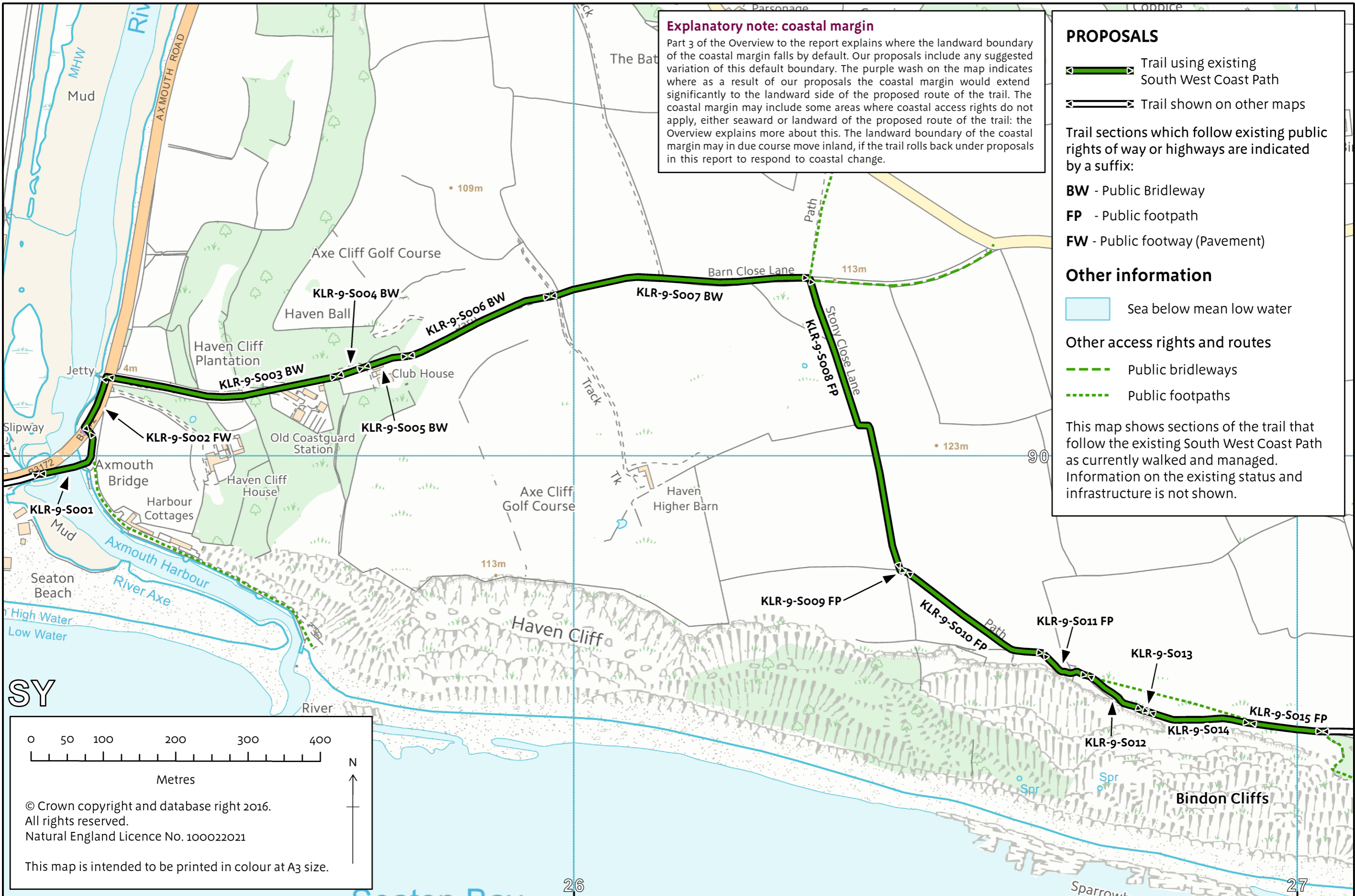
- 9.3.8 Adjacent to route sections KLR-9-S019 to KLR-9-S040 and KLR-9-S047 to KLR-9-S083, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the cliff as shown on maps 9b to 9e.
- 9.3.9 Adjacent to route sections KLR-9-S001 and KLR-9-S003 to KLR-9-S005, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with landward edge of the path shown as the trail on map 9a.
- 9.3.10 Adjacent to route sections KLR-9-S002 and KLR-9-S089, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with landward edge of the pavement shown as the trail on maps 9a and 9e.
- 9.3.11 Adjacent to route sections KLR-9-S085 to KLR-9-S087, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the tree line which, at the time of writing this report, is at the landward edge of the trail on map 9e.

Local restrictions and exclusions

- 9.3.12 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

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






© Crown copyright and database right 2016.
 All rights reserved.
 Natural England Licence No. 100022021
 This map is intended to be printed in colour at A3 size.

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

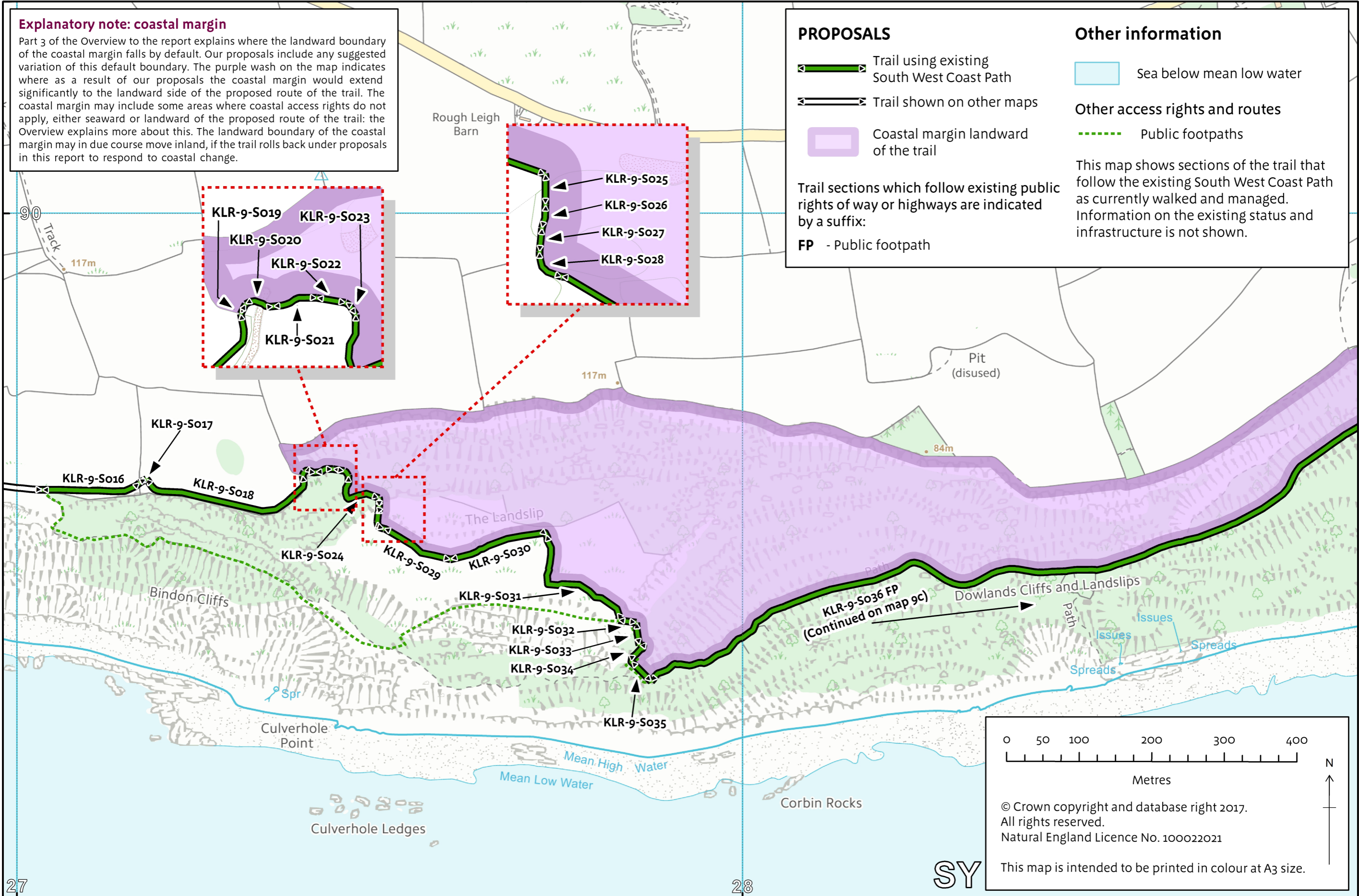
-  Trail using existing South West Coast Path
-  Trail shown on other maps
-  Coastal margin landward of the trail

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.



0 50 100 200 300 400
 Metres

© Crown copyright and database right 2017.
 All rights reserved.
 Natural England Licence No. 100022021

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
- 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

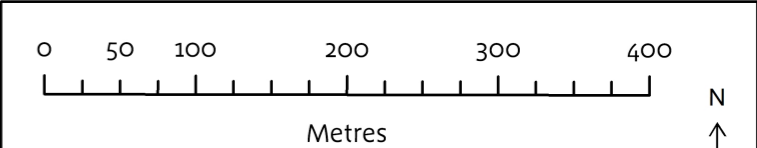
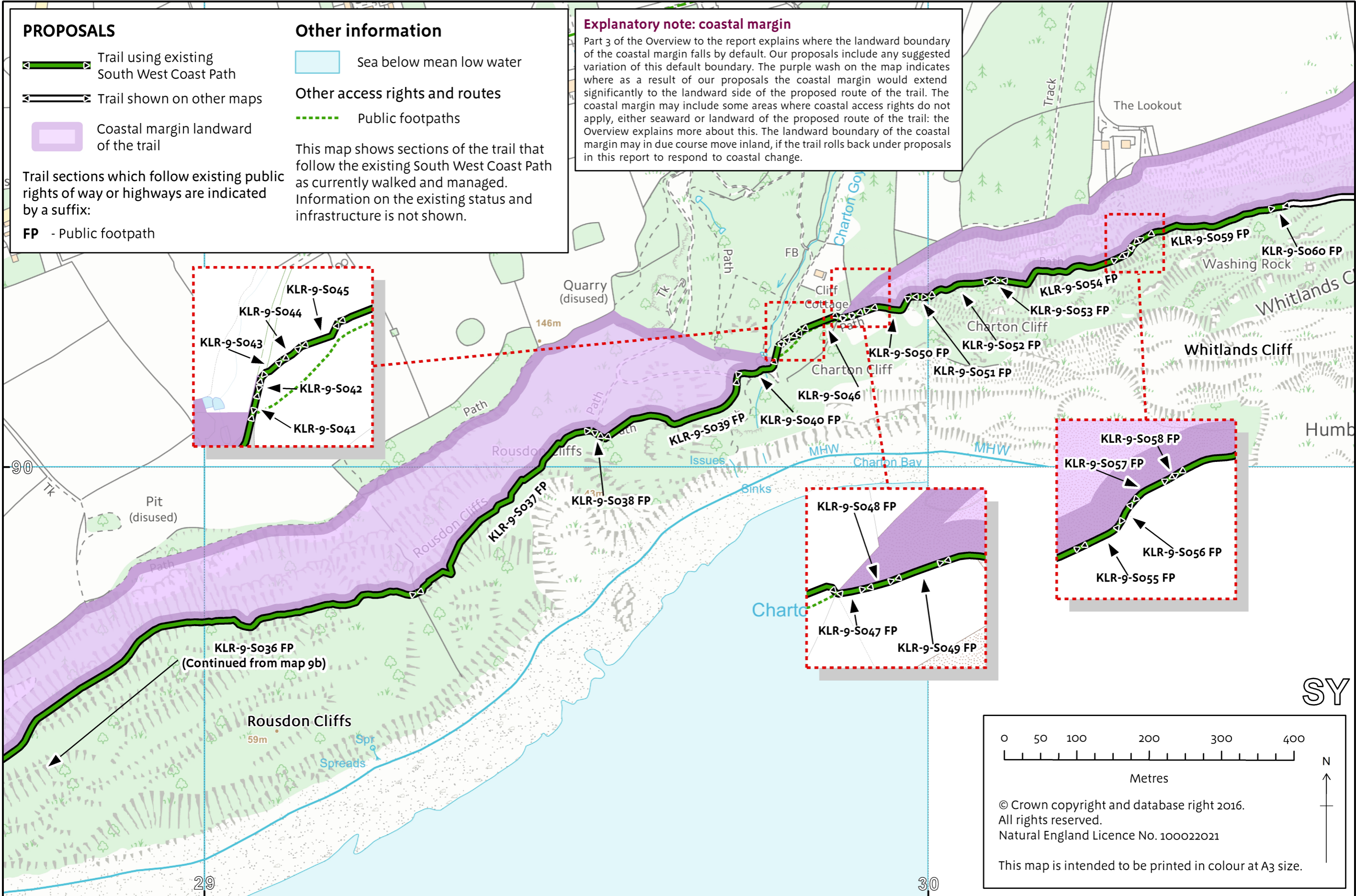
Other access rights and routes

- 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.

Explanatory note: coastal margin

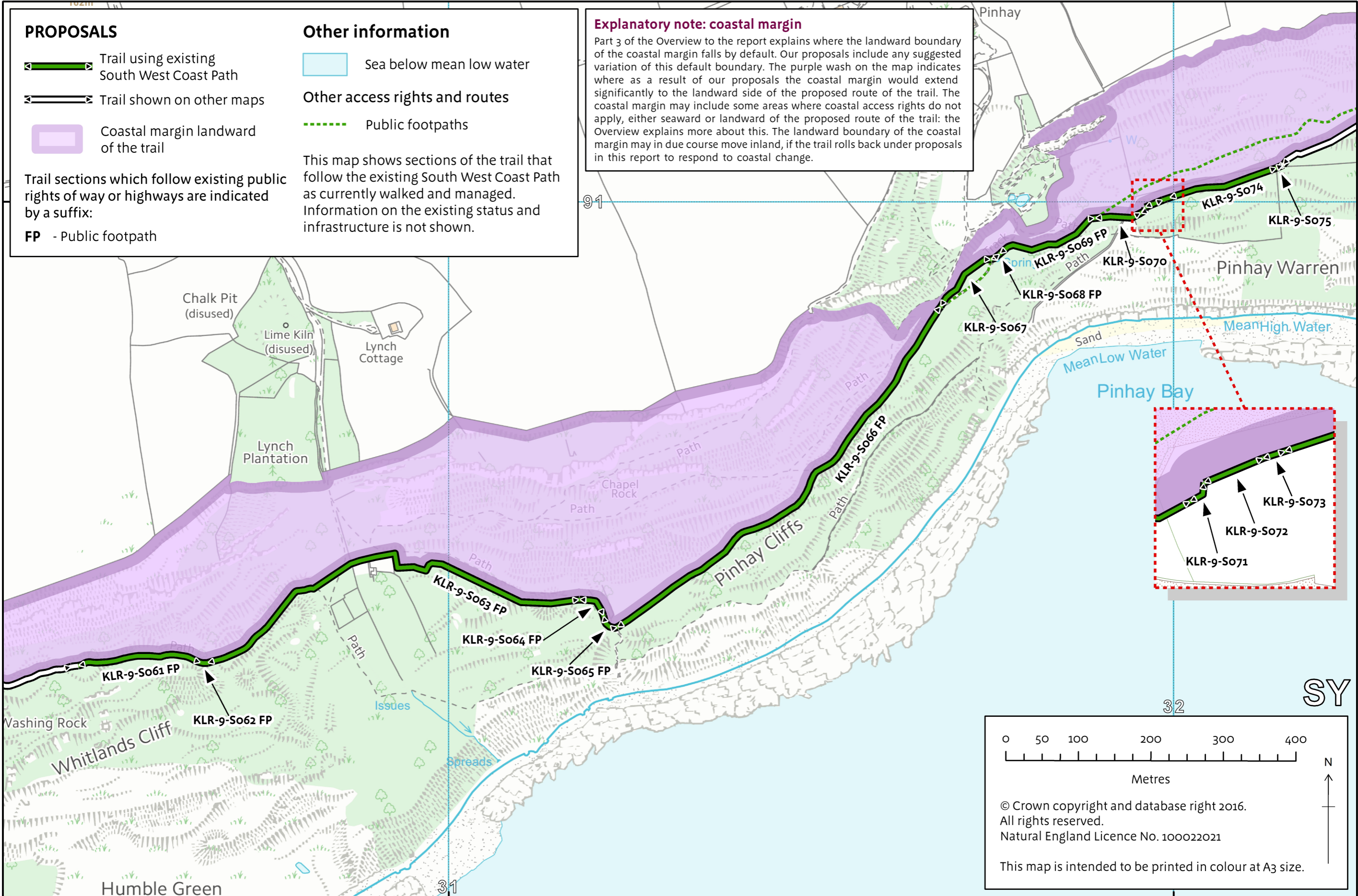
Part 3 of the Overview to the report explains where the landward boundary of the coastal margin falls by default. Our proposals include any suggested variation of this default boundary. The purple wash on the map indicates where as a result of our proposals the coastal margin would extend significantly 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.






© Crown copyright and database right 2016.
All rights reserved.
Natural England Licence No. 100022021

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

SY



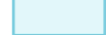


PROPOSALS

-  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
- RD** - Public road

Other information

-  Sea below mean low water
- Other access rights and routes**
 -  Public footpaths
 -  Lyme Regis to Rufus Castle approved route

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.

