

## Chapter 5:

# Steeple Hall Farm to Maylandsea

England Coast Path: Burnham-on-Crouch to Maldon - Natural England's Proposals

## Part 5.1: Introduction

**Start Point: Steeple Hall Farm (grid reference: TL 922 029)**

**End Point: Maylandsea (grid reference: TL 893 022)**

**Relevant Maps: 5a to 5c**

### Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps:

#### The Trail:

- 5.1.1 Generally follows existing walked routes, including public rights of way, along most of this length.
- 5.1.2 Mainly follows the coastline quite closely and maintains good views of the sea.
- 5.1.3 This part of the coast includes the following sites, designated for nature conservation or heritage preservation (See maps C and C2 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.

- 5.1.4 With input from specialists we have considered each of the sites involved and the relevant designations and concluded that for this section of the coast our proposals will not have a detrimental effect.

In relation to those nature conservation sites listed above, refer to our published Access and Sensitive Features Appraisal for more information.

**See part 6b of the Overview - 'Protection of sensitive features' for a description of our overall approach and a summary of our conclusions**

## Accessibility:

5.1.5 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:

- There are a number of pedestrian gates and kissing gates necessary for livestock management (at junction of BCM-5-Soo1 with BCM-5-Soo2 and on BCM-5-Soo5, BCM-5-Soo6 and BCM-5-S035)
- At Blackwater Marina, Maylandsea it is necessary to descend/ascend two short flights of steps (BCM-5-So23 and BCM-5-So25)
- The surface of the trail is uneven or narrow in parts of the sea wall footpath on BCM-5-Soo8.

**See part 6a 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 the Overview.

5.1.6 Estuary: This report proposes that the trail should contain sections aligned on the estuary of the Rivers Crouch and Blackwater, extending upstream from the open coast. See part 5 of the Overview. The trail covered by this chapter includes part of this estuary route on the River Blackwater.

5.1.7 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 5.2.1 below.

5.1.8 At sections BCM-5-Soo1 to BCM-5-Soo8, BCM-5-Soo10 to BCM-5-So22, BCM-5-So26, BCM-5-So27 and BCM-5-So32 to BCM-5-So35 we have used this discretion to limit the landward extent of the coastal margin to the landward top edge of the seawall. This has had the effect of reducing the amount of coastal margin that would have otherwise been available by default. This option provides the most clarity because:

- The break in slope provides an easily identifiable boundary for access users.
- There is no clear boundary feature at the bottom of the seawall that could mark the boundary of the coastal margin.

**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'.**

5.1.9 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 5.3.7 in the Formal Proposals Section of this report and Part 10 of the Overview.

5.1.10 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 10 of the Overview - 'Restrictions and exclusions' - for details.**

- 5.1.11 Other factors affecting access: At route sections BCM-5-So17 [Harlow Blackwater Sailing Club, Maylandsea], BCM-5-So24 [Blackwater Marina, Maylandsea] plus BCM-5-So29 & BCM-5-So31 [Maylandsea Bay Sailing Club] public access may be interrupted from time to time for short periods to allow vehicles to pass and/or boats to be launched/recovered. This arrangement would continue without any local restriction on the new access rights to give effect to it formally.

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

- 5.1.12 There are no additional measures that we consider necessary to improve the safety or convenience of the trail on this length of coast.
- 5.1.13 Ongoing management and maintenance would be necessary in accordance with the general approach described in part 8 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 7 - 'Physical establishment of the trail' and 8 - 'Maintenance of the trail' of the Overview for more information.**

### **Future Change:**

- 5.1.14 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 9 of the Overview. See table 5.2.1 below for details of the sections likely to be affected in the foreseeable future.
- 5.1.15 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 6f - 'Coastal processes' and 9 - 'Future changes' of the Overview for more information.**

## Part 5.2: Commentary on Maps

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

### 5.2.1 Section Details – Maps 5a to 5c: Steeple Hall Farm to Maylandsea

Notes on table:

Column 2 – an asterisk (\*) against the route section number means see also table 5.2.2: 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 7 – all sections are subject to a s25A CROW direction (year round) in the coastal margin for the purpose of excluding access to saltmarsh and mudflat on grounds of unsuitability for public access.

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)
5a	BCM-5-S001 & BCM-5-S002	Public footpath	Grass	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-5-S003 & BCM-5-S004 & BCM-5-S005	Public footpath	Bare soil: Compacted	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-5-S006 & BCM-5-S007	Public footpath	Grass	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
5a & 5b	BCM-5-S008	Public footpath	Grass	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
5b	BCM-5-S009*	Other existing walked route	Grass	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	BCM-5-S010	Public footpath	Bare soil: Compacted	Yes - Normal	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-5-S011 to BCM-5-S013	Public footpath	Gravel	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
5c	BCM-5-S014 to BCM-5-S016	Public footpath	Gravel	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-5-S017 & BCM-5-S018	Public footpath	Concrete	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-5-S019 to BCM-5-S021	Public footpath	Gravel	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin

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)
5c	BCM-5-So22	Public footpath	Concrete	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-5-So23	Public footpath	Steps: Concrete	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	BCM-5-So24	Public footpath	Concrete	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	BCM-5-So25	Public footpath	Steps: Concrete	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	BCM-5-So26 & BCM-5-So27	Public footpath	Concrete	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-5-So28	Public footpath	Bare soil: Compacted	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-5-So29	Public footpath	Concrete	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	BCM-5-So30	Public footpath	Bare soil: Compacted	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-5-So31	Public footpath	Concrete	No	Landward edge of trail	Not used	Margin
	BCM-5-So32	Public footpath	Grass	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-5-So33* & BCM-5-So34*	Other existing walked route	Grass	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	BCM-5-So35	Public footpath	Grass	No	Landward edge of top of sea wall	Clarity and cohesion	Margin

## 5.2.2 Other options considered: Maps 5a to 5c: Steeple Hall Farm to Maylandsea

Map(s)	Section number(s)	Option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option as the route
5b	BCM-5-S009	We considered aligning the trail along the existing public footpath that runs on the foreshore adjacent to this section as shown on the map.	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ it is available at all states of the tide;</li> <li>■ it is safer;</li> <li>■ the walking surface is more pleasant to walk along and accessible to a wider range of people;</li> <li>■ it is an existing walked line;</li> <li>■ it maintains views of the sea;</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; and</li> <li>■ this proposal is made with the support of the landowner.</li> </ul>
5c	BCM-5-S033 & BCM-5-S034	We considered aligning the trail along another existing public footpath that runs inland (to the west) as shown on the map.	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ it is closer to the sea and maintains views of the sea;</li> <li>■ it is more direct;</li> <li>■ it is currently the more popular walked line;</li> <li>■ the walking surface is better so it is more accessible to a wider range of people; and</li> <li>■ this proposal is made with the support of the landowner.</li> </ul>

## 5.2.3 Roll-back implementation – more complex situations: Map 5a to 5c: Steeple Hall Farm to Maylandsea

There are no complex roll-back issues on this length of coast.

## Part 5.3: Chapter 5 - Formal Proposals

- Below are our formal proposals to the Secretary of State for the length of coast shown on maps 5a to 5c.
- They should be read in conjunction with the relevant maps.
- The commentary above explains the practical effect of these proposals.

### Formal Proposals – Steeple Hall Farm to Maylandsea

#### Discretion to include an estuary

- 5.3.1 Natural England proposes to exercise its functions as if the sea included the estuarial waters of the River Blackwater as far as Promenade Park in Maldon as indicated by the extent of the trail shown on map 6e.

#### Proposed route of the trail

- 5.3.2 In relation to route sections BCM-5-S001 to BCM-5-S007 and BCM-5-S011 to BCM-5-S035, the route is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps 5a to 5c as the proposed route of the trail.
- 5.3.3 In relation to route sections BCM-5-S008 to BCM-5-S010, the route, as initially determined at the time the report was prepared, is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps 5a and 5b as the proposed route of the trail.
- 5.3.4 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 9 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

- 5.3.5 Adjacent to route sections BCM-5-028 and BCM-5-030, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the existing boundary fence which, at the time of writing this report, is landward of the public footpath shown as the trail on map 5c.
- 5.3.6 Adjacent to route sections BCM-5-S001 to BCM-5-S008, BCM-5-S010 to BCM-5-S022, BCM-5-S026, BCM-5-S027 and BCM-5-S032 to BCM-5-S035 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 5a to 5c.

#### Local restrictions and exclusions

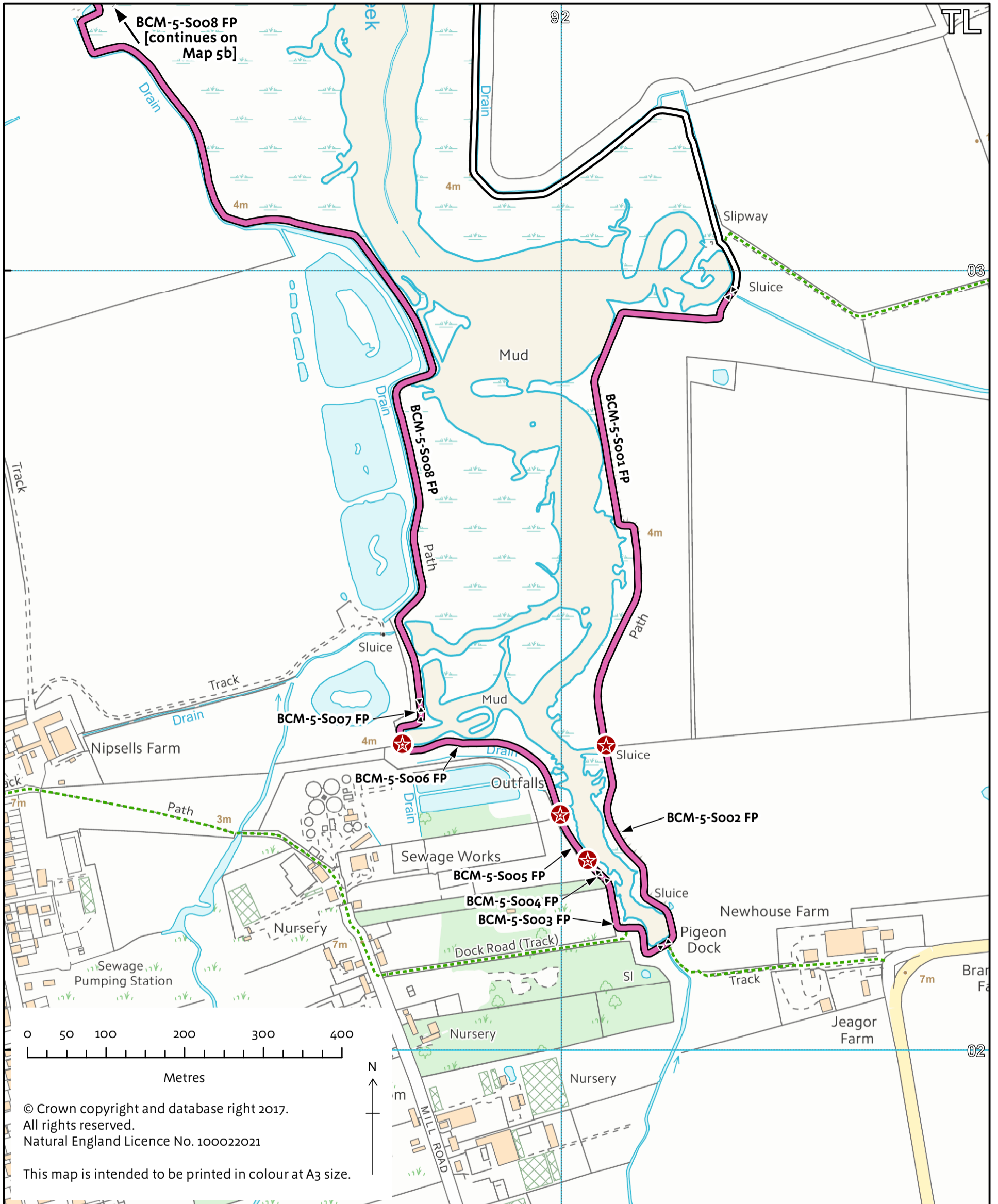
- 5.3.7 Natural England proposes to exclude access relevant to this length of coast, as follows:

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 BCM-5-S001 to BCM-5-S035. 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 and does not apply to any land that could be considered to be excepted. See map R in the Overview for details.

**Please refer to Part 10 of the Overview for further details.**

#### Alternative routes

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



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

**PROPOSALS**

- Trail using existing public right of way or highway
- 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**

**Other access rights and routes**

- Public footpaths

**Trail infrastructure**

- Existing kissing gate to be retained
- Existing pedestrian gate to be retained

**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.



