

Chapter 3:

Wells Lifeboat Station to Burnham Overy Staithe

England Coast Path: Weybourne to Hunstanton - Natural England's Proposals

Part 3.1: Introduction

Start Point:	Wells Lifeboat Station (grid reference: TF9147 4550)
End Point:	Burnham Overy Staithe (grid reference: TF8445 4435)
Relevant Maps:	3a to 3e

Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps:

The Trail:

- 3.1.1 Follows existing walked routes, including public rights of way, along this length of the coast.
- 3.1.2 Follows the coastline with good views of the sea and estuary creeks at Holkham Meals and Overy Marshes respectively. Sea views along other sections of this length of the trail are limited by the dunes and pine woodland that are seaward of it.
- 3.1.3 Is aligned on the beach or foreshore at Holkham Meals.
- 3.1.4 Follows existing route of the Norfolk Coast Path National Trail along this length of the coast.
- 3.1.5 We propose to adopt the walked line of the Norfolk Coast Path National Trail along this section of coast. There are 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, other processes and convenience for walkers. As explained at part 6a of the Overview, assuming these proposals are approved we intend to submit a separate variation report to the Secretary of State to change the route of the existing national trail to coincide with the approved line of the England Coast Path insofar as the two are different.

Protection of sensitive features

- 3.1.6 This part of the coast includes the following sites, designated for nature conservation or heritage preservation (See map C of the Overview):
 - The Wash & North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

- North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- North Norfolk Coast Special Protection Area (SPA)
- North Norfolk Coast Ramsar site
- North Norfolk Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its geological and wildlife interest

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.

3.1.7 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 reaching this conclusion we have identified that it would be necessary to:

- improve existing waymarking between sections WBH-3-S008 and WBH-3-S012;
- install information signs at Holkham Meals and Burnham Overy Staithe;
- propose the exclusion of access to some of the seaward margin using formal directions, as outlined in the formal proposals at paragraph 3.3.10;
- provide fencing for use at the exclusion zones identified within the seaward margin.

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

3.1.8 There are few artificial barriers to accessibility on the proposed route, which make 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 trail would follow an uneven sandy path along Holkham Meals Dunes

See part 6a of the Overview - 'Recreational issues' - for more information.

Where we have proposed exercising our discretion

3.1.9 Estuary: This report proposes that the trail should include a route around the Stiffkey and Glaven Estuaries as well as the Burnham, Mow, Overy and Norton Estuaries, extending upstream from the open coast as far as the first crossing points for the rivers. The trail covered by this chapter

includes part of the above estuarine waters with associated crossing points identified within chapters 1, 2 and 4 of this report.

See part 5 of the Overview. The trail covered by this chapter includes these estuary routes.

- 3.1.10 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 3.2.1 below.
- 3.1.11 We have used our discretion on some sections of the route to limit the landward extent of the coastal margin in some areas of coastal sand dunes and mapped to an adjacent physical boundary such as a fence line. This has been 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 physical features identified provide an easily identifiable boundary for access users.
- 3.1.12 At Holkham Meals we have used our discretion to propose the inclusion of additional, more extensive landward area within the coastal margin, to secure or enhance public enjoyment of this part of the coast. The owner of this land is content for us to propose this. See maps 3b and 3c.

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'.

- 3.1.13 Restrictions and exclusions: We have proposed to exclude access by direction under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) in certain places along this coast. For details of these directions, see 3.3.10 in the Formal Proposals Section of this chapter and Part 10 of the Overview.
- 3.1.14 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.

Establishment and ongoing management of the trail

- 3.1.15 Some physical establishment of the trail would be necessary, in accordance with the general approach described in part 7 the Overview:
- two interpretation panels will be installed at Holkham Meals
 - one interpretation panel will be installed at Burnham Overy Staithe
- 3.1.16 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 part 7 - 'Physical establishment of the trail' and part 8 - 'Maintenance of the trail' of the Overview for more information.

Future Change

- 3.1.17 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 9 of the Overview. See table 3.2.1 below for details of the sections likely to be affected in the foreseeable future.
- 3.1.18 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 part 6e - 'Coastal processes' and part 9 - 'Future changes' of the Overview for more information.

Part 3.2: Commentary on Maps

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

3.2.1 Section Details – Maps 3a to 3e: Wells Lifeboat Station to Burnham Overy Staithe

Notes on table:

Column 2 – an asterisk (*) against the route section number means see also table 3.2.2: 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.

1	2	3	4	5	6b	6c	7
Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Current status of this section	Current surface of this section	Roll-back proposed? (See Part 9 of Overview)	Landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary discretion	Proposed exclusions or restrictions (see Part 10 of Overview)
3a	WBH-3-S001	Other existing walked route	Concrete	Yes - normal	Landward edge of path	Clarity and cohesion	None
	WBH-3-S002	Other existing walked route	Raised walkway	Yes - normal	Landward edge of raised walkway	Clarity and cohesion	None
	WBH-3-S003	Other existing walked route	Tarmac	Yes - normal	Landward edge of trail	Not used	None
	WBH-3-S004*	Multi-use route	Bare soil (compacted)	Yes - normal	Landward edge of path	Clarity and cohesion	None
	WBH-3-S005*	Multi-use route	Bare soil (compacted)	Yes - normal	Fence line	Not used	None
3a & 3b	WBH-3-S006*	Multi-use route	Bare soil (compacted)	Yes - normal	Ditch	Clarity and cohesion	None
3b	WBH-3-S007*	Other existing walked route	Boardwalk	Yes - normal	Landward edge of the inland track	Additional landward area	None
	WBH-3-S008*	Other existing walked route	Sand	Yes - normal	Landward edge of the inland track	Additional landward area	None
	WBH-3-S009*	Other existing walked route	Sand	Yes - normal	Landward edge of the inland track	Additional landward area	None
3c	WBH-3-S010*	Other existing walked route	Sand	Yes - normal	Landward edge of the inland track	Additional landward area	Margin
3d	WBH-3-S011*	Other existing walked route	Sand	Yes - normal	Fence line	Clarity, and cohesion	Margin
	WBH-3-S012*	Public footpath	Boardwalk	Yes - normal	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	WBH-3-S013	Public footpath	Aggregate	Yes - normal	Landward edge of path	Clarity and cohesion	None
3e	WBH-3-S014	Public footpath	Aggregate	Yes - normal	Landward edge of path	Clarity and cohesion	Margin
	WBH-3-S015	Public footpath	Bare soil	Yes - normal	Property boundaries	Clarity and cohesion	Margin

3.2.2 Other options considered: Maps 3a to 3e: Wells Lifeboat Station to Burnham Overy Staithe

Map(s)	Section number(s)	Option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option as the route
3a to 3b	WBH-3-S004 to WBH-3-S006	We considered aligning the trail seaward of the pine woodland to provide sea views.	We opted for the proposed route because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The proposed route is the currently promoted, walked and maintained line of the Norfolk Coast Path National Trail. ■ The surface along the beach does not make for easy walking. The Coastal Access Scheme discourages use of the beach where alternative options are available close to the sea with a surface more convenient for walking.
3b to 3d	WBH-3-S007 to WBH-3-S012	We considered aligning the trail landward of the pine woodland along a track	We opted for the proposed route because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The proposed route is the currently promoted, walked and maintained line of the Norfolk Coast Path National Trail.

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 3e.
- They should be read in conjunction with the relevant maps.
- The commentary above explains the practical effect of these proposals.

Formal Proposals – Wells-next-the-Sea to Burnham Overy Staithe

Discretion to include an estuary

- 3.3.1 Natural England proposes to exercise its functions as if the sea included the estuarial waters of the Rivers Glaven, Stiffkey and Burn as indicated by the extent of the trail shown on maps 3a, 3b and 3e.

Proposed route of the trail

- 3.3.2 In relation to route sections WBH-3-S001 to WBH-3-S015, 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 3e as the proposed route of the trail.
- 3.3.3 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 to link with other parts of the route that need to roll back in direct response to such changes;

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

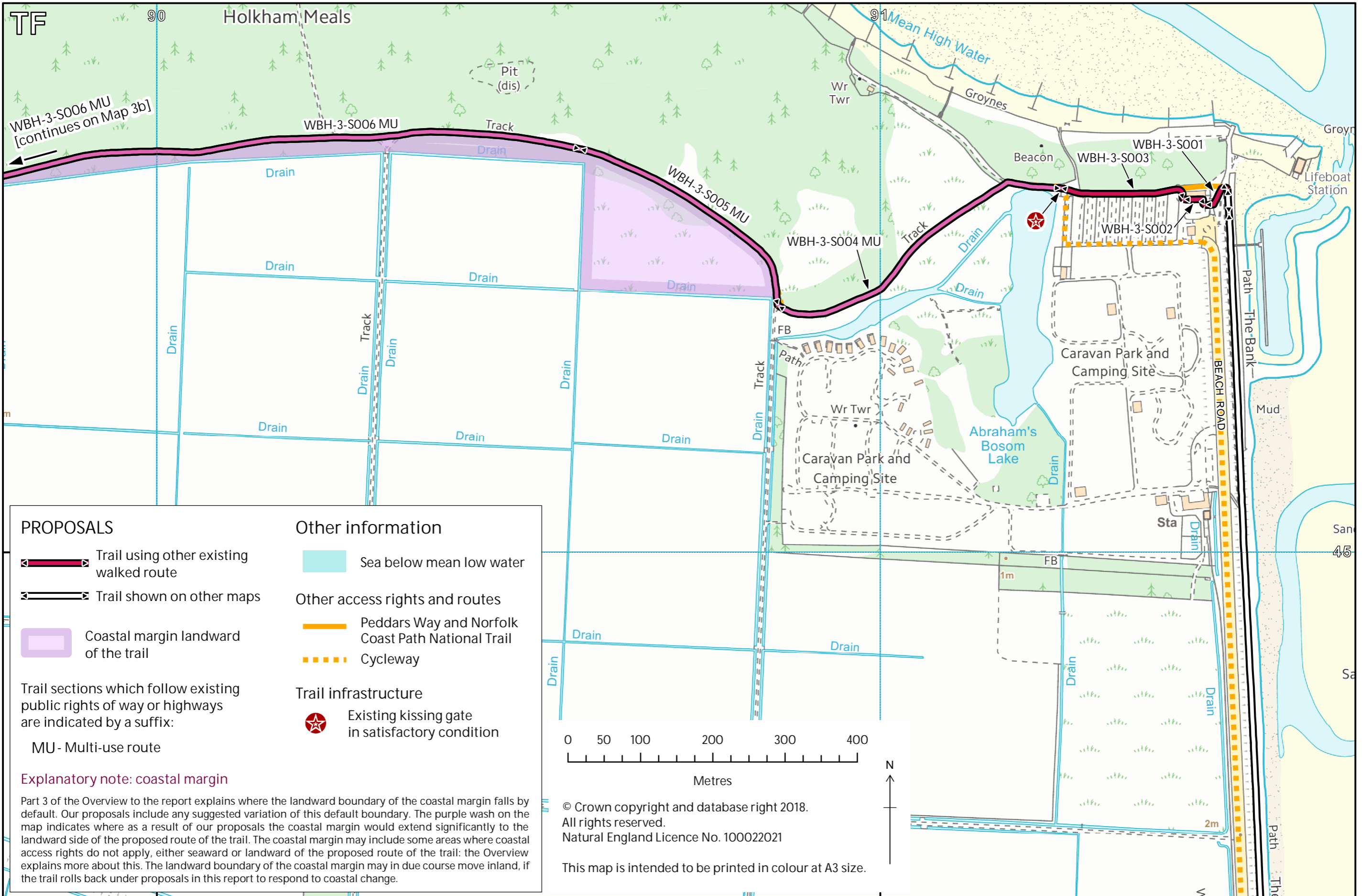
- 3.3.4 Adjacent to route sections WBH-3-S001, WBH-3-S004, WBH-3-S013 and WBH-3-S014, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the path shown as the trail on maps 3a, 3d and 3e.
- 3.3.5 Adjacent to route section WBH-3-S002, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the raised walkway shown as the trail on map 3a.
- 3.3.6 Adjacent to route section WBH-3-S006, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the seaward edge of the ditch which at the time of writing this report, is landward of the existing walked route shown as the trail on maps 3a and 3b.

- 3.3.7 Adjacent to route sections WBH-3-S011 and WBH-3-S012, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the existing fence line which, at the time of writing this report, is landward of the existing walked route shown as the trail on map 3d.
- 3.3.8 Adjacent to route section WBH-3-S015, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the existing property boundaries which, at the time of writing this report are landward of the public footpath shown as the trail on map 3e.
- 3.3.9 Adjacent to route sections WBH-3-S007 to WBH-3-S010, the landward boundary of the coastal margin is to coincide with the landward edge of the inland track which, at the time of writing this report, is landward of the existing walked route shown as the trail on maps 3b and 3c.

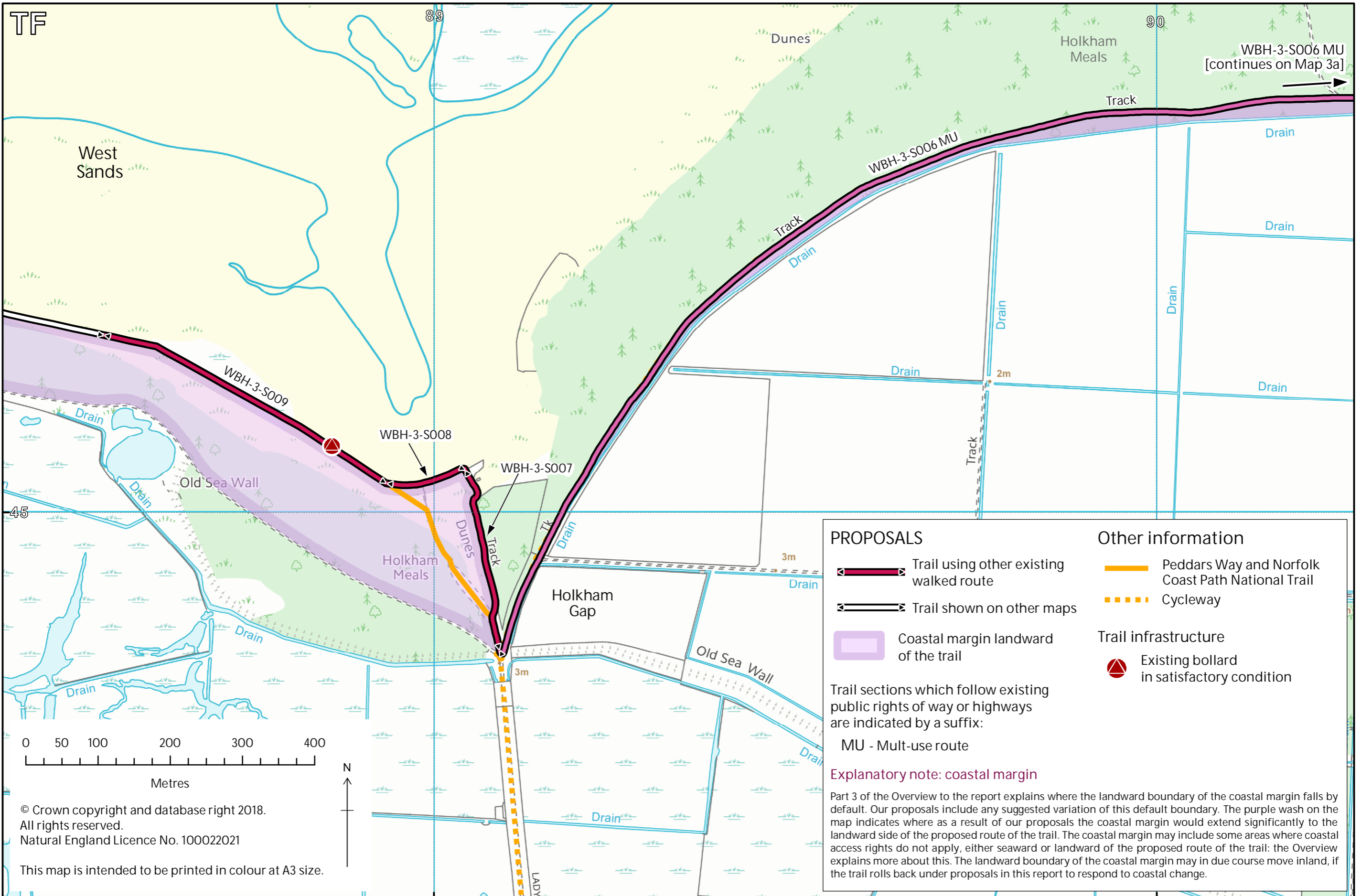
Local restrictions and exclusions

- 3.3.10 Natural England proposes to exclude access relevant to this length of coast, as follows:
- access to zoned areas within the margin at Holkham Bay, seaward of sections WBH-3-S010 and WBH-3-S011, will be excluded between 1 April to 15 August each year to protect breeding birds. See Overview map H.
 - access to zoned areas within the margin at Gun Hill, seaward of section WBH-3-S012, will be excluded between 1 April to 15 August each year to protect breeding birds. See Overview map I.
 - access to saltmarsh and mudflats will be excluded north of Burnham Overy Staithe, seaward of route section WBH-3-S014 and WBH-3-S015, because we are satisfied that the land is unsuitable for public access. See Overview map J.

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



Map 3a Wells Lifeboat Station to Holkham Meals



TF

WBH-3-S006 MU [continues on Map 3a]

West Sands

Dunes

Holkham Meals

WBH-3-S009

WBH-3-S008

WBH-3-S007

Old Sea Wall

Holkham Meals

Holkham Gap

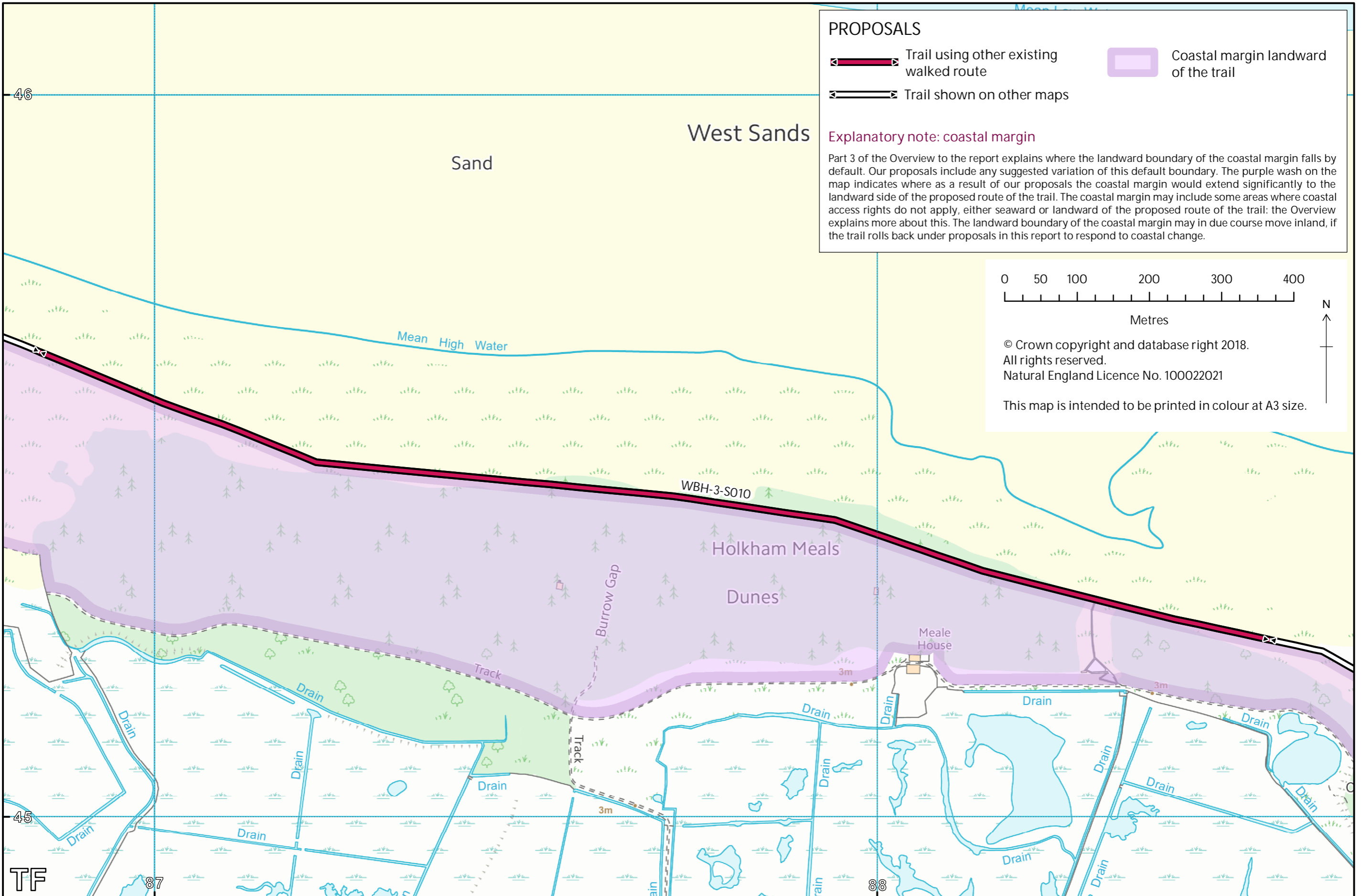
Old Sea Wall

0 50 100 200 300 400
 Metres



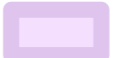


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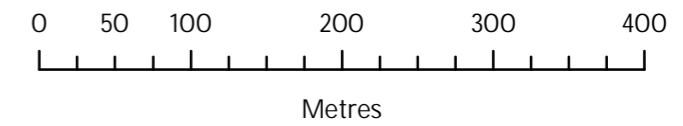


PROPOSALS

-  Trail using other existing walked route
-  Trail shown on other maps
-  Coastal margin landward of the trail

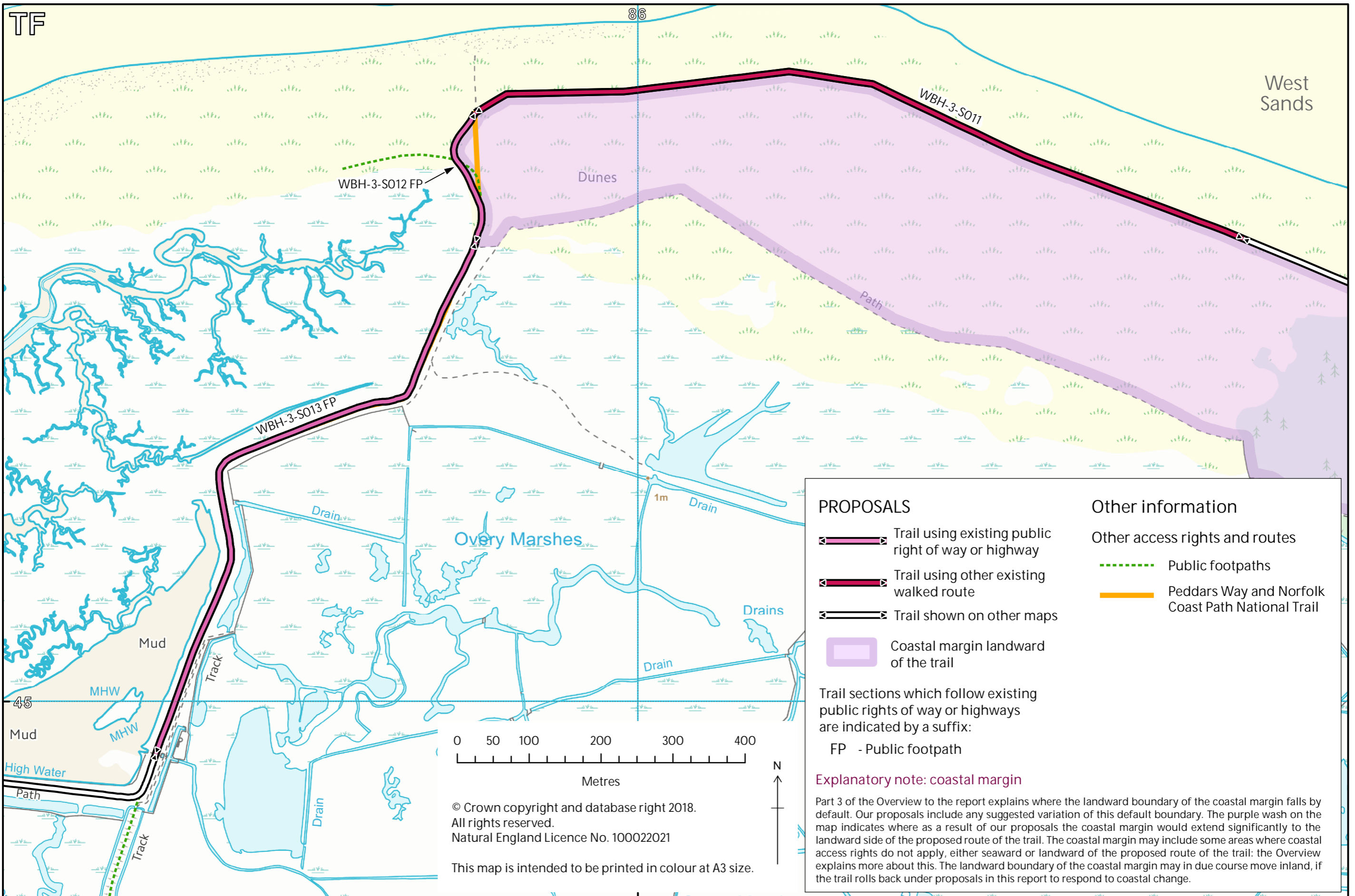
Explanatory note: coastal margin

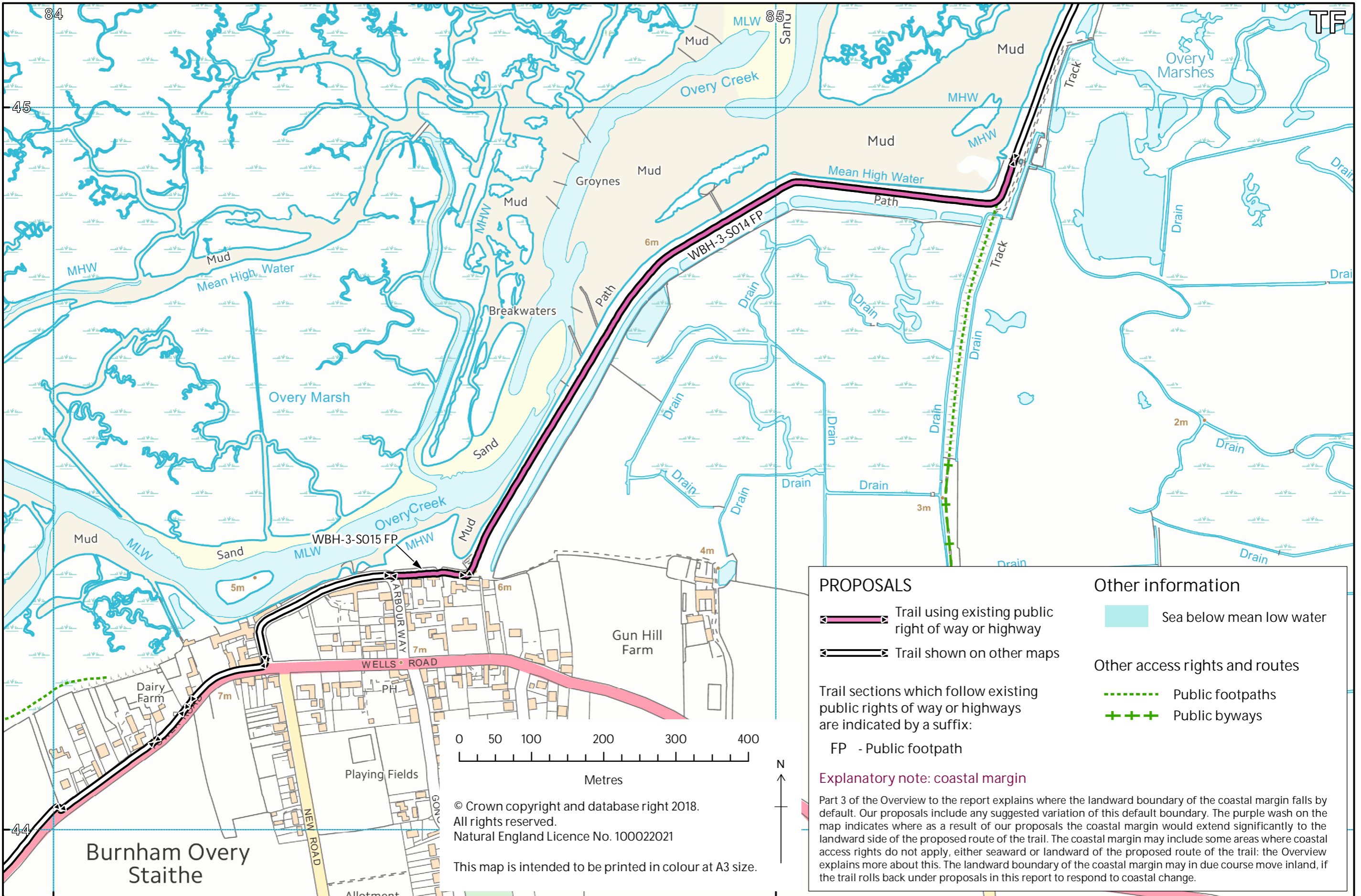
Part 3 of the Overview to the report explains where the landward boundary of the coastal margin falls by default. Our proposals include any suggested variation of this default boundary. The purple wash on the map indicates where as a result of our proposals the coastal margin would extend significantly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