



England Coast Path Stretch: Grain to Woolwich

Report GWO 6: Erith Saltings to Woolwich Foot Tunnel

Part 6.1: Introduction

Start Point:	Erith Saltings (Grid reference 552758 177719)
End Point:	Woolwich Foot Tunnel (Grid reference 543299 179291)
Relevant Maps:	GWO 6a to GWO 6h

6.1.1 This is one of a series of linked but legally separate reports published by Natural England under section 51 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, which make proposals to the Secretary of State for improved public access along and to this stretch of coast between Grain and Woolwich.

6.1.2 This report covers length GWO 6 of the stretch, which is the coast between Erith Saltings and Woolwich Foot Tunnel. It makes free-standing statutory proposals for this part of the stretch, and seeks approval for them by the Secretary of State in their own right under section 52 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

6.1.3 The report explains how we propose to implement the England Coast Path (“the trail”) on this part of the stretch, and details the likely consequences in terms of the wider ‘Coastal Margin’ that will be created if our proposals are approved by the Secretary of State. Our report also sets out:

- any proposals we think are necessary for restricting or excluding coastal access rights to address particular issues, in line with the powers in the legislation; and
- any proposed powers for the trail to be capable of being relocated on particular sections (“roll-back”), if this proves necessary in the future because of coastal change.

6.1.4 There is also a single Overview document for the whole of this stretch of coast, explaining common principles and background. **This and the other individual reports relating to the stretch should be read in conjunction with the Overview. The Overview explains, among other things, how we have considered any potential environmental impacts of improving public access to this part of the coast, and this report, and other separately published assessments we refer to, then provides more detail on these aspects where appropriate.**

Part 6.2: Proposals Narrative

The trail:

6.2.1 Generally follows existing walked routes, including public rights of way, along most of this length.

6.2.2 Mainly follows the coastline quite closely and maintains good views of the sea.

6.2.3 In one area, between GWO-6-S001 and GWO-6-S007, a significant inland diversion is necessary to take the trail past Manor Road Industrial Estate, in Erith, which is inaccessible to the public.

6.2.4 Follows the promoted and well-marked extension to the Thames Path National Trail from the Thames Barrier to Crayford. The promoted footpath is entitled Thames Path Extension East, but is not formally designated as a National Trail.

Protection of the environment:

6.2.5 We consider that the coastal environment along this length of coast is unlikely to be sensitive to the improvements to coastal access envisaged and that no special measures are needed in respect of our proposals.

6.2.6 Natural England is satisfied that the proposals for coastal access in this report are made in accordance with relevant environmental protection legislation.

Part 6b of the Overview includes some contextual information about protecting the environment along this length of coast.

Accessibility:

6.2.7 There are few artificial barriers to accessibility on the proposed route. However, the natural coastal terrain is often challenging for people with reduced mobility and this is the case on sections of our proposed route because:

- There is a steep bridge (at Belvedere Industrial Estate, Map GWO 6b) and some steps (at Erith, Map GWO 6a) along the route where it would be necessary to ascend and descend.

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

Where we have proposed exercising statutory discretions:

6.2.8 **Estuary:** This report proposes that the trail should contain sections aligned on the estuary of the River Thames and its tributaries, extending upstream from the open coast. Natural England proposes to exercise its functions as if the sea included the estuarial waters of that river as far as *the Woolwich Foot Tunnel in the Royal Borough of Greenwich*, as indicated by the extent of the trail shown on map GWO 6h.

See part 5 of the Overview for a detailed analysis of the options considered for this estuary and our resulting proposals.

6.2.9 **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 path edge, pavement edge or fence line to make the extent of the new access rights clearer. See Table 6.3.1 below.

6.2.10 The Proposals Tables show where we are proposing to alter the default landward boundary of the coastal margin. These proposals are set out in columns 5b and 5c of table 6.3.1. Where these columns are left blank, we are making no such proposals, so the default landward boundary applies. See the note relating to Columns 5b & 5c (above Table 6.3.1) explaining what this means in practice.

See also part 3 of the Overview - 'Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps', for a more detailed 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.

6.2.11 **Restrictions and/or exclusions:** We have proposed to exclude access by direction under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) in certain places along this section of coast.

Exclusion of access to the saltmarsh/flat between Erith Saltings to Woolwich Foot Tunnel.

6.2.12 Access to the saltmarsh and mudflat in the coastal margin seaward of route sections GWO-6-S001 to GWO-6-S052 is to be excluded all year-round by direction under s25A of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) as it is unsuitable for public access. The exclusion does not affect the route itself and will have no legal effect on land where coastal access rights do not apply. See Directions Maps GWO 6A to 6C.

6.2.13 The mudflat in this area is soft and sinking. It does not provide a safe walking surface and is subject to frequent tidal inundation. RNLI and Coastguard data indicates incidents of people being rescued from the mud.

6.2.14 These directions will not prevent or affect:

- any existing local use of the land by right, such use is not covered by coastal access rights;
- any other use people already make of the land locally by formal agreement with the landowner, or by informal permission or traditional toleration; or
- use of any registered rights of common or any rights at common law or by Royal Charter etc.

Any such use is not prohibited or limited by these arrangements.

6.2.15 The directions we give under section 25A are intended to avoid any new public rights being created over the areas in question in view of the hidden dangers of mudflats.

See part 8 of the Overview - 'Restrictions and exclusions' - for a summary for the entire stretch.

6.2.16 **Optional alternative routes:** An optional alternative route is to operate as an optional diversion from the ordinary route between GWO-6-S014 to GWO-6-S017 (map GWO 6b), when it is subject to flooding from high spring tides. The optional alternative route is to be at the centre of the line shown as GWO-6-OA001 to GWO-6-OA005 on map GWO 6b. It would not have the effect of creating any additional spreading room on either the seaward or the landward side.

6.2.17 By default, an optional alternative route covers the land two metres either side of the approved line. However, by virtue of s55D(2) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, where the optional alternative route follows an existing path corridor, we may propose that the trail should adopt a variable width as dictated by the existing physical features on either side. Columns 5a and 5b of Table 6.3.2 describe the boundaries of the alternative route strips on any route sections where we have proposed use of this discretion in order to clarify the extent of the access strip.

6.2.18 **Coastal erosion:** Natural England is able to propose that the route of the trail would be able to change in the future, without further approval from the Secretary of State, in response to coastal change. This would happen in accordance with the criteria and procedures for 'roll-back' set out in part 7 of the Overview.

Natural England may only propose the use of this roll-back power:

- as a result of coastal erosion or other geomorphological processes or encroachment by the sea, or
- in order to link with other parts of the route that need to roll back in direct response to such changes.

6.2.19 We have chosen not to make any such proposal in this report. Accordingly the route is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps GWO 6a to GWO 6h as the proposed route of the trail.

Other future change:

6.2.20 At this point we do not foresee any other need for future changes to the access provisions that we have proposed within this report.

See parts 7 - 'Future changes' of the Overview for more information.

Establishment of the trail:

6.2.21 Below we summarise how our proposed route for the trail would be physically established to make it ready for public use before any new rights come into force.

Establishment works will only start on this length of coast once these proposals have been approved by the Secretary of State. The works may therefore either precede or follow the start of establishment works on other lengths of coast within the stretch, and detailed in their separate reports.

6.2.22 Our estimate of the capital costs for physical establishment of the trail on the proposed route is £10,573 and is informed by:

- information already held by the access authorities, the Royal Borough of Greenwich and the London Borough of Bexley, in relation to the management of the existing public rights of way and highways furniture;
- the conclusions of our deliberations in relation to potential impacts on the environment; and
- information gathered while visiting affected land and talking to the people who own and manage it about the options for the route.

6.2.23 There is one main elements to the overall cost:

- **New Signs:** A number of new signs would be needed on the trail, in particular in the urban area.

The surfaces and access furniture of the existing paths and footways on the proposed route are generally of a suitable standard for the trail, but there are some places where new steps, boardwalks and dropped kerbs would enhance the convenience of the trail. More significant items of establishment works are shown on the relevant maps accompanying this report.

Table 1 shows our estimate of the capital cost for each of the main elements of physical establishment described above.

Table 1: Estimate of capital costs

Item	Cost
Signs & interpretation	£9,194
Project management	£1,379

Total **£10,573 (Exclusive of any VAT payable)**

6.2.24 Once the Secretary of State's decision on our report has been notified, and further to our conversations with land managers during the route planning stage, the Royal Borough of Greenwich and the London Borough of Bexley will liaise with affected land owners and occupiers about relevant aspects of the design, installation and maintenance of the new signs and infrastructure that are needed on their land. Prior to works being carried out on the ground, all necessary permissions, authorisations and consents will be obtained. All such works would conform to the published standards for National Trails and the other criteria described in our Coastal Access Scheme.

Maintenance of the trail:

6.2.25 Because the trail on this length of coast will form part of the National Trail being created around the whole coast of England called the England Coast Path, we envisage that it will be maintained to the same high quality standards as other National Trails in England (see The New Deal; Management of National Trails in England from April 2013: details at Annex A of the Overview).

6.2.26 We estimate that the annual cost to maintain the trail will be £2,054 (exclusive of any VAT payable). In developing this estimate we have taken account of the formula used to calculate Natural England's contribution to the maintenance of other National Trails.

Part 6.3: Proposals Tables

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

6.3.1 Section Details – Maps GWO 6a to GWO 6e: Erith Saltings to Woolwich Foot Tunnel

Key notes on table:

1. Column 4 – ‘No’ means no roll-back is proposed for this route section. ‘Yes – normal’ means roll-back is proposed and is likely to follow the current feature (e.g. cliff edge/beach) for the foreseeable future as any coastal change occurs.
2. Column 5a - Certain coastal land types are included automatically in the coastal margin where they fall landward of the trail if they touch it at some point. The relevant land type (foreshore, cliff, bank, barrier, dune, beach, flat or section 15 land – see Glossary) is shown in this column where appropriate. “No” means none present on this route section.
3. Columns 5b and 5c – Any entry in these columns means we are proposing to align the landward boundary of the coastal margin on this route section with the physical feature(s) shown in 5b, for the reason in 5c. No text here means that for this route section the landward edge of the margin would be that of the trail itself - or if any default coastal land type is shown in 5a, that would be its landward boundary instead.

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
Map(s)	Route section number (s)	Current status of route section(s)	Roll-back proposed? (See Part 7 of Overview)	Landward margin contains coastal land type?	Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary proposal	Explanatory notes
GWO 6a	GWO-6-S001	Public footpath	No	Yes - bank	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	It is not clear where the edge of the bank is on the ground due to dense scrub
GWO 6a	GWO-6-S002	Public footpath	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
GWO 6a	GWO-6-S003 to GWO-6-S005	Cycle track (pedestrian)	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
GWO 6a	GWO-6-S006	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
GWO 6a	GWO-6-S007	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
GWO 6a	GWO-6-S008	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
Map(s)	Route section number (s)	Current status of route section(s)	Roll-back proposed? (See Part 7 of Overview)	Landward margin contains coastal land type?	Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary proposal	Explanatory notes
GWO 6a	GWO-6-S009	Cycle track (pedestrian)	No	No	Promenade edge	Clarity and cohesion	
GWO 6a	GWO-6-S010	Other existing walked route	No	No	Promenade edge	Clarity and cohesion	
GWO 6a	GWO-6-S011	Other existing walked route	No	No	Various	Clarity and cohesion	The various boundary features include the edge of road and fence line
GWO 6a	GWO-6-S012	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
GWO 6a	GWO-6-S013	Other existing walked route	No	Yes - barrier			
GWO 6a	GWO-6-S014	Public footpath	No	Yes - barrier			
GWO 6b	GWO-6-S015 to GWO-6-S018	Public footpath	No	Yes - barrier			
GWO 6b	GWO-6-S019	Cycle track (pedestrian)	No	Yes - bank			
GWO 6b	GWO-6-S020	Cycle track (pedestrian)	No	Yes - barrier			
GWO 6c	GWO-6-S021 to GWO-6-S023	Cycle track (pedestrian)	No	Yes - barrier			
GWO 6c	GWO-6-S024	Cycle track (pedestrian)	No	Yes - bank	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	The fence line provides a clearer boundary than the landward edge of bank

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
Map(s)	Route section number (s)	Current status of route section(s)	Roll-back proposed? (See Part 7 of Overview)	Landward margin contains coastal land type?	Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary proposal	Explanatory notes
							(which extends beyond the fence line)
GWO 6c	GWO-6-S025 to GWO-6-S026	Cycle track (pedestrian)	No	Yes - bank	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	The fence line provides a clearer boundary than the landward edge of bank (which extends beyond the fence line)
GWO 6d	GWO-6-S027 to GWO-6-S029	Cycle track (pedestrian)	No	Yes - bank	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	The fence line provides a clearer boundary than the landward edge of bank (which extends beyond the fence line)
GWO 6d	GWO-6-S030	Cycle track (pedestrian)	No	Yes - bank	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	The fence line provides a clearer boundary than the landward edge of bank (which extends beyond the fence line)
GWO 6d	GWO-6-S031 to GWO-6-S033	Cycle track (pedestrian)	No	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	
GWO 6e	GWO-6-S034	Cycle track (pedestrian)	No	Yes - bank	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	The fence line provides a clearer boundary than the landward

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
Map(s)	Route section number (s)	Current status of route section(s)	Roll-back proposed? (See Part 7 of Overview)	Landward margin contains coastal land type?	Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary proposal	Explanatory notes
							edge of bank (which extends beyond the fence line)
GWO 6e	GWO-6-S035	Cycle track (pedestrian)	No	Yes - barrier	Promenade edge	Clarity and cohesion	It is not clear where the edge of the barrier is on the ground
GWO 6f	GWO-6-S036	Cycle track (pedestrian)	No	Yes - barrier	Promenade edge	Clarity and cohesion	It is not clear where the edge of the barrier is on the ground
GWO 6f	GWO-6-S037 to GWO-6-S038	Cycle track (pedestrian)	No	Yes - barrier	Promenade edge	Clarity and cohesion	It is not clear where the edge of the barrier is on the ground
GWO 6g	GWO-6-S039	Cycle track (pedestrian)	No	Yes -barrier	Promenade edge	Clarity and cohesion	It is not clear where the edge of the barrier is on the ground
GWO 6g	GWO-6-S040	Cycle track (pedestrian)	No	No	Promenade edge	Clarity and cohesion	
GWO 6g	GWO-6-S041	Cycle track (pedestrian)	No	Yes - barrier	Promenade edge	Clarity and cohesion	It is not clear where the edge of the barrier is on the ground
GWO 6g	GWO-6-S042	Cycle track (pedestrian)	No	Yes - barrier	Promenade edge	Clarity and cohesion	It is not clear where the edge of the barrier is on the ground
GWO 6h	GWO-6-S043	Cycle track (pedestrian)	No	Yes - barrier	Promenade edge	Clarity and cohesion	It is not clear where the edge of the barrier is on the ground

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
Map(s)	Route section number (s)	Current status of route section(s)	Roll-back proposed? (See Part 7 of Overview)	Landward margin contains coastal land type?	Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary proposal	Explanatory notes
GWO 6h	GWO-6-S044 to GWO-6-S052	Cycle track (pedestrian)	No	No	Promenade edge	Clarity and cohesion	

6.3.2 Optional alternative route details – Map GWO 6b: Erith to Belvedere Industrial Estate

Notes on table:

1. Column 4 – ‘No’ means no roll-back is proposed for this route section. ‘Yes – normal’ means roll-back is proposed and is likely to follow the current feature (e.g. cliff edge/beach) for the foreseeable future as any coastal change occurs.
2. Columns 5a and 5b – An entry in either or both of these columns denotes a proposal to align the seaward or landward boundary (as the case may be) of this section of the alternative route strip with the physical feature(s) shown. No text in the column means no such proposal, meaning that the edge of the alternative route strip would be at the default width of 2 metres on the relevant side of the route’s centre line.

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	6
Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Current status of route section(s)	Roll-back proposed? (See Part 7 of Overview)	Proposal to specify seaward boundary of alternative route strip	Proposal to specify landward boundary of alternative route strip	Explanatory notes
GWO 6b	GWO-6-OA001	Public footpath	No	Path edge	Path edge	
GWO 6b	GWO-6-OA002	Public footway (pavement)	No	Pavement edge	Pavement edge	
GWO 6b	GWO-6-OA003	Public footway (pavement)	No	Pavement edge	Pavement edge	
GWO 6b	GWO-6-OA004	Public footway (pavement)	No	Pavement edge	Pavement edge	
GWO 6b	GWO-6-OA005	Cycle track (pedestrian)	No	Path edge	Path edge	

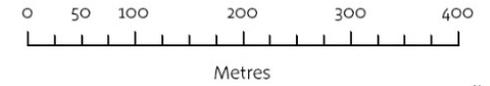
Part 6.4: Proposals Maps

6.4.1 Map Index

Map reference	Map title
GWO 6a	Erith Saltings to Erith
GWO 6b	Erith to Belvedere Industrial Estate
GWO 6c	Belvedere Industrial Estate to Jenningtree Point
GWO 6d	Jenningtree Point to Crossness Sewage Works
GWO 6e	Crossness Sewage Works to Thamesmead
GWO 6f	Thamesmead to Tripcock Ness
GWO 6g	Tripcock Ness to Thamesmead West
GWO 6h	Thamesmead West to Woolwich Foot Tunnel
Directions Map GWO 6A	Directions for Report GWO 6: Erith Saltings to Woolwich Foot Tunnel
Directions Map GWO 6B	Directions for Report GWO 6: Erith Saltings to Woolwich Foot Tunnel
Directions Map GWO 6C	Directions for Report GWO 6: Erith Saltings to Woolwich Foot Tunnel

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

PROPOSALS

- Trail using existing public right of way or highway
- Trail using other existing walked route
- Trail shown on other maps

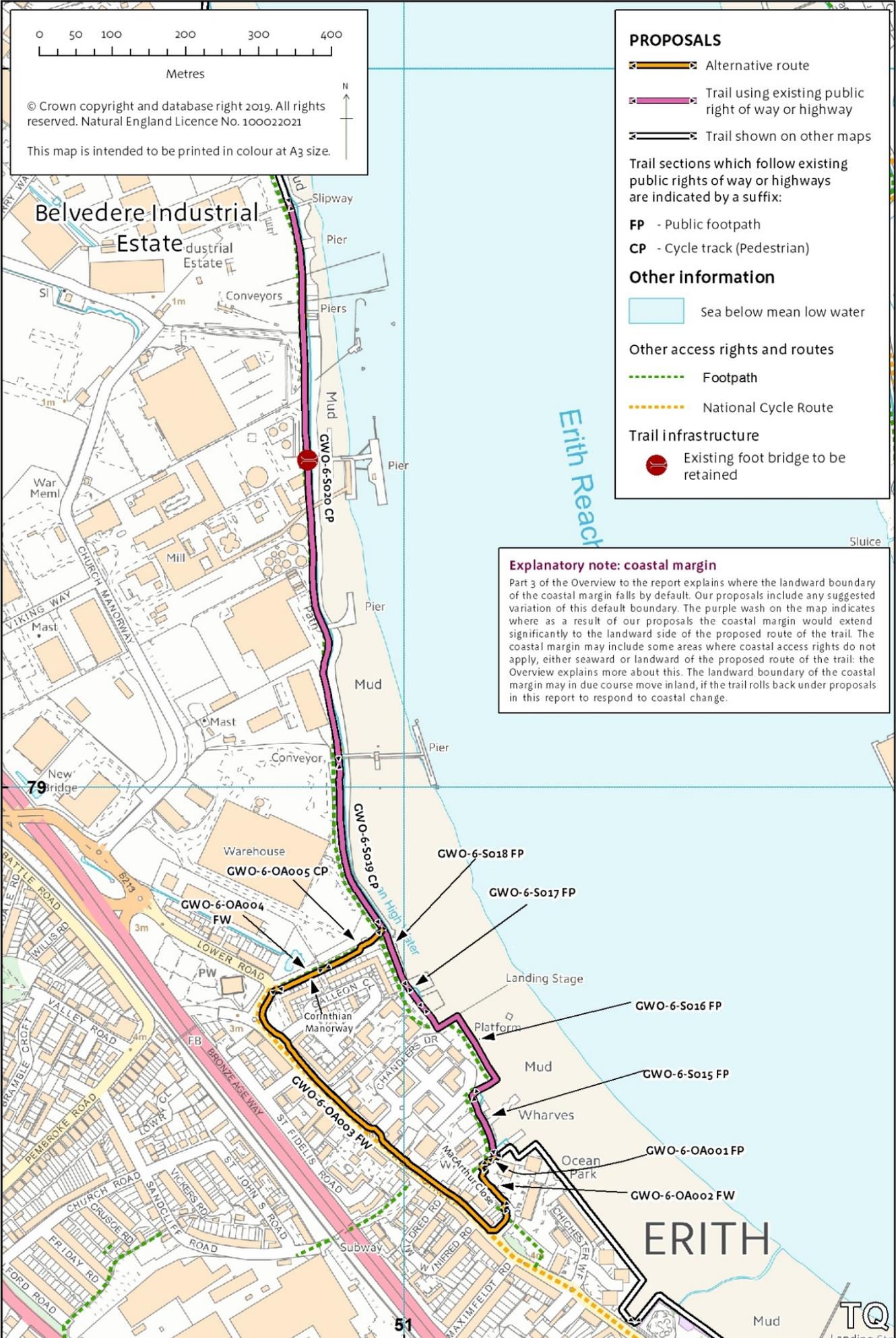
Trail sections which follow existing public rights of way or highways are indicated by a suffix:

- FP** - Public footpath
- FW** - Public footway (Pavement)
- CP** - Cycle track (Pedestrian)

Other information

- Sea below mean low water
- Other access rights and routes**
- Footpath
- National Cycle Route
- Trail infrastructure**
- Existing pedestrian gate to be retained
- Existing steps to be retained







0 50 100 200 300 400
Metres

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Explanatory note: coastal margin

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PROPOSALS

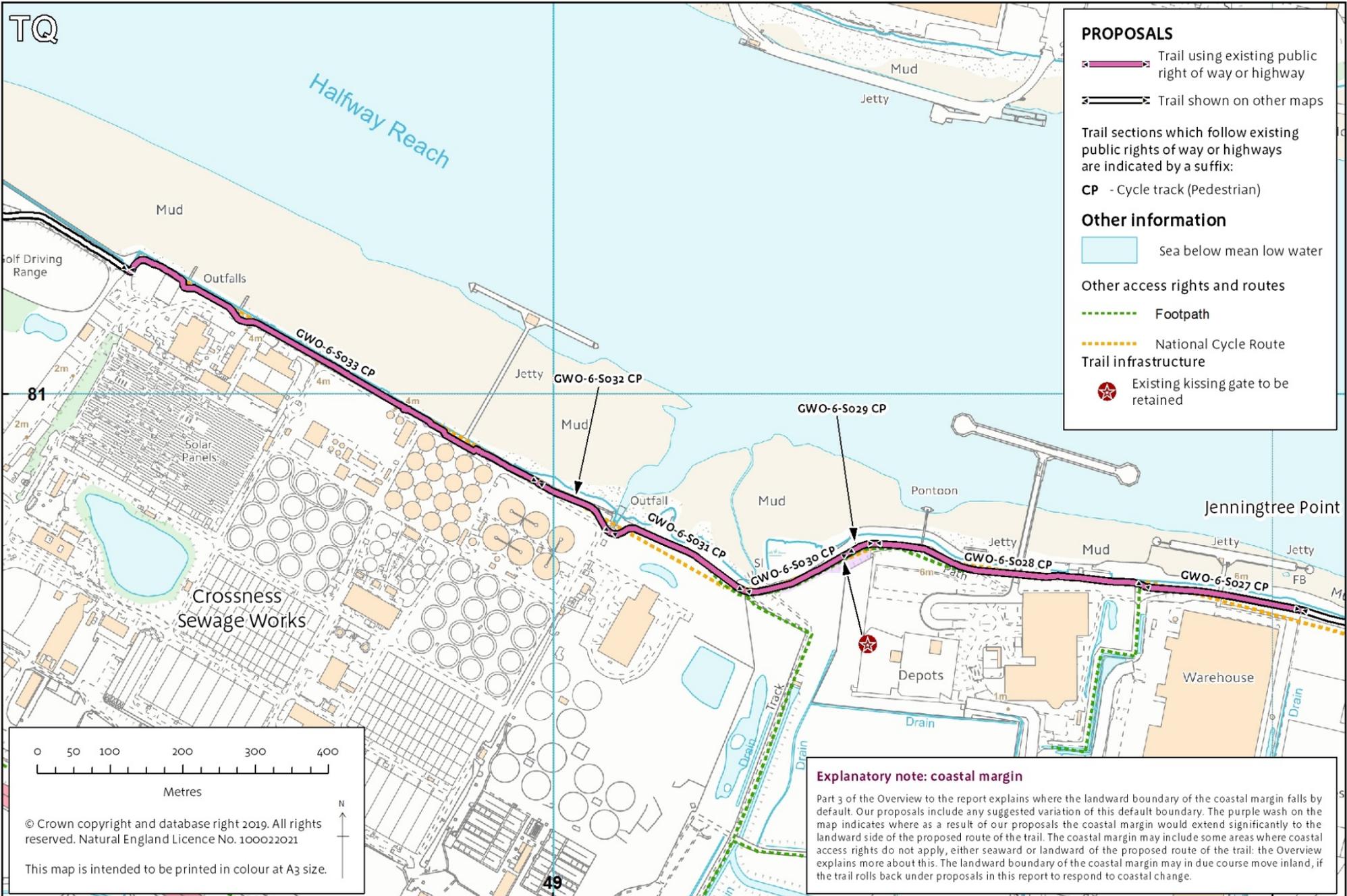
- Trail using existing public right of way or highway
- Trail shown on other maps

Trail sections which follow existing public rights of way or highways are indicated by a suffix:

CP - Cycle track (Pedestrian)

Other information

- Sea below mean low water
- Other access rights and routes
 - Footpath
 - National Cycle Route



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:

CP - Cycle track (Pedestrian)

Other information

- Sea below mean low water

Other access rights and routes

- Footpath
- National Cycle Route

Trail infrastructure

- Existing kissing gate to be retained

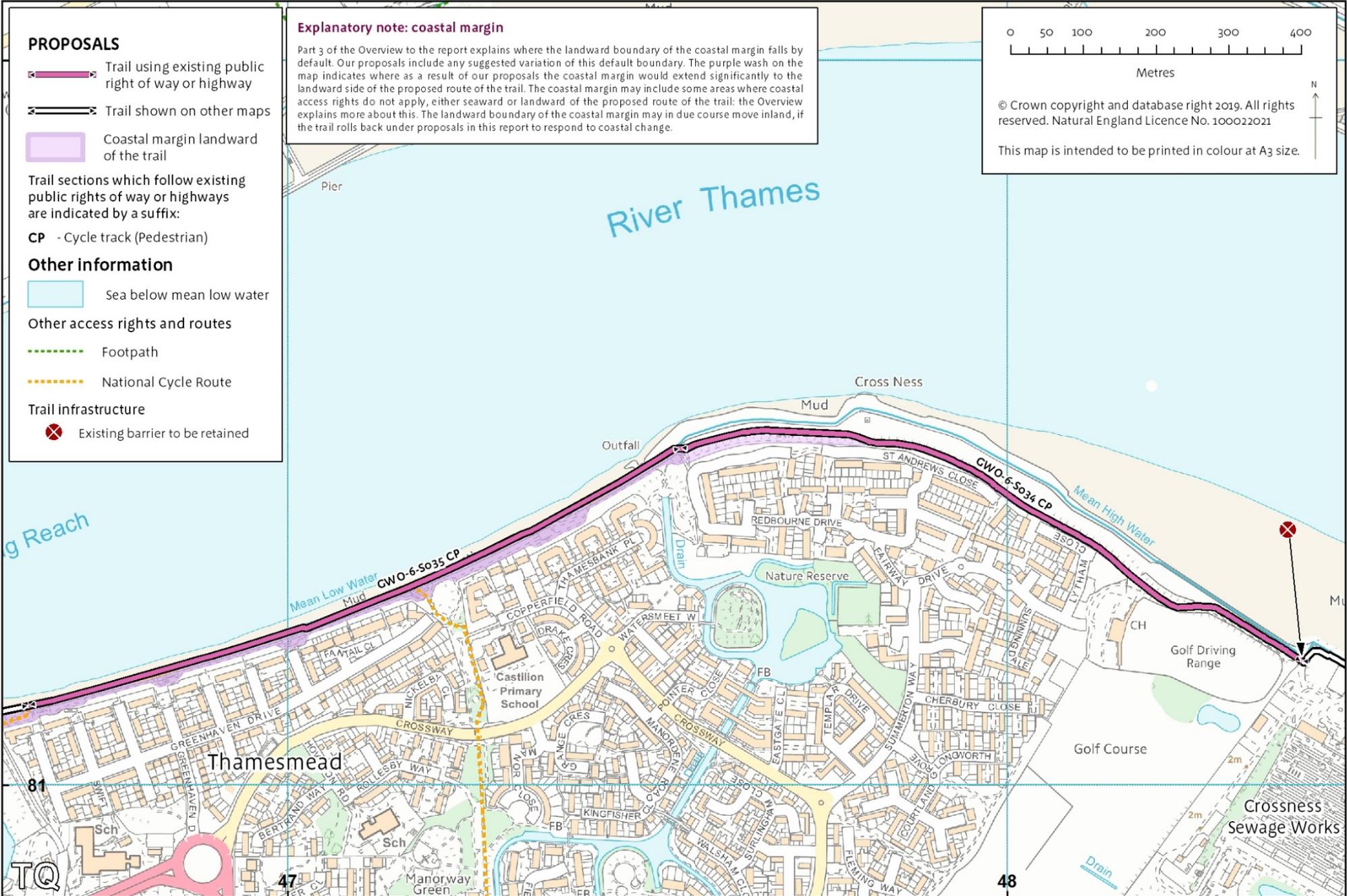
Explanatory note: coastal margin

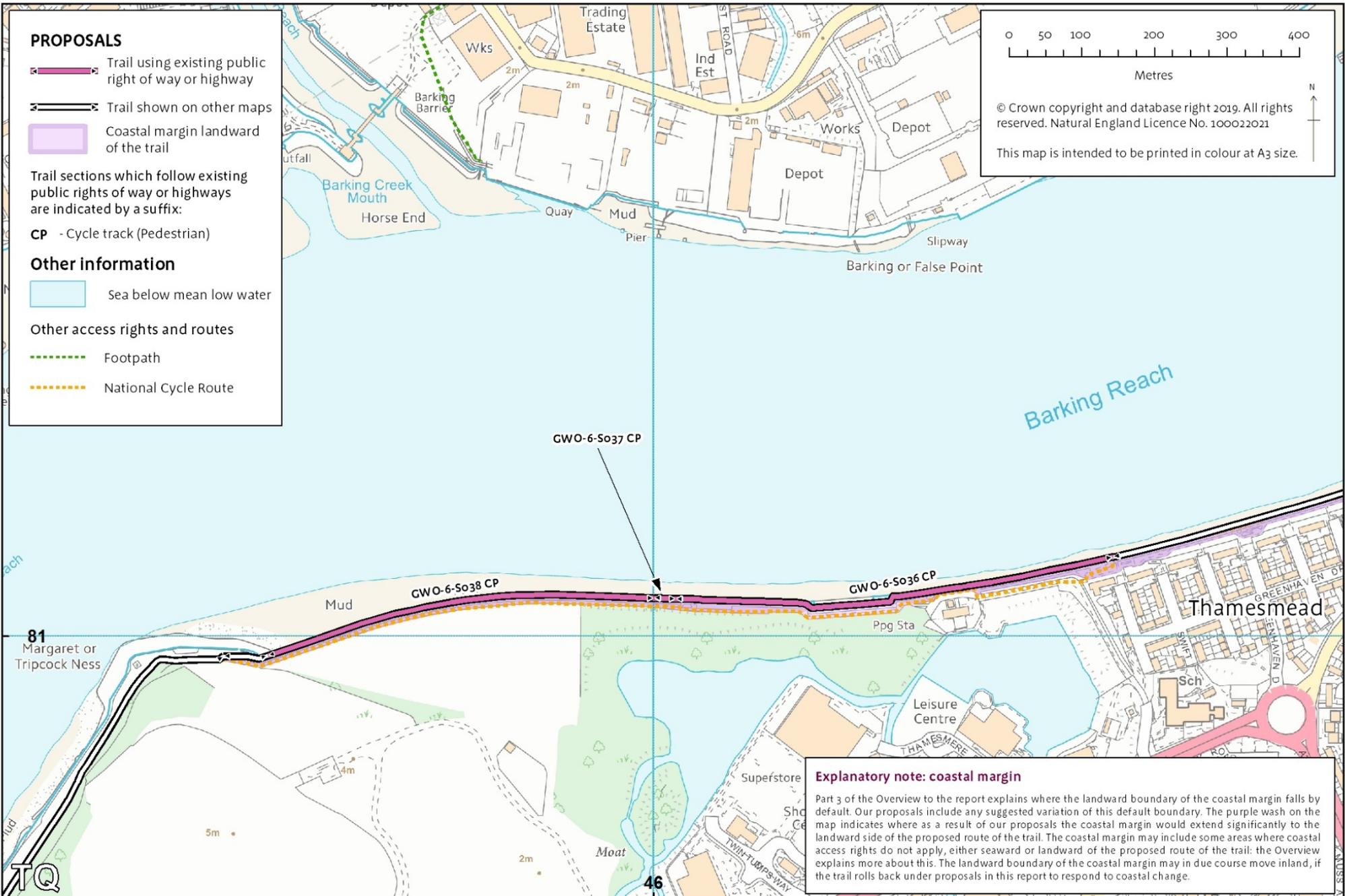
Part 3 of the Overview to the report explains where the landward boundary of the coastal margin falls by default. Our proposals include any suggested variation of this default boundary. The purple wash on the map indicates where as a result of our proposals the coastal margin would extend significantly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

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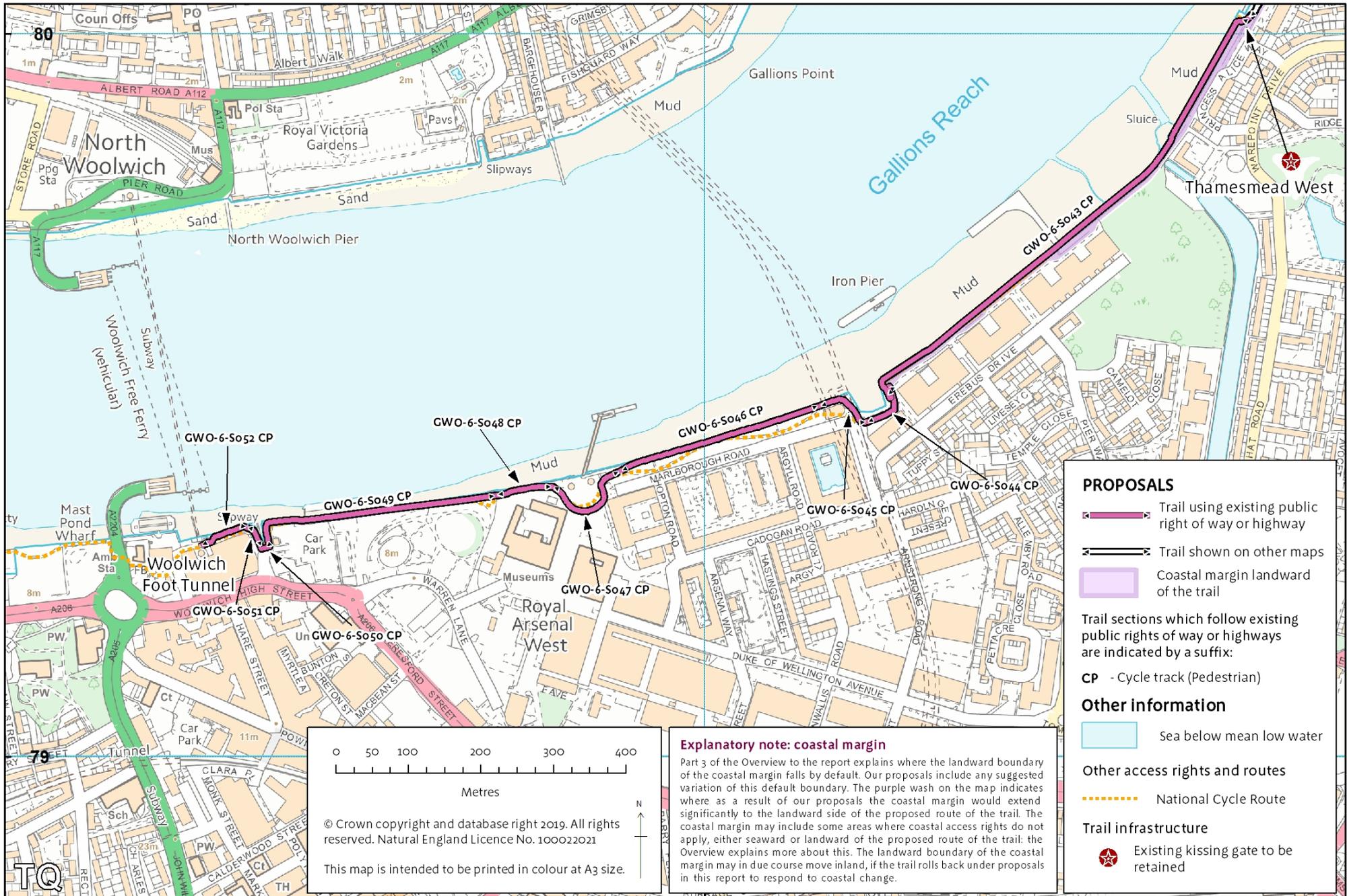
This map is intended to be printed in colour at A3 size.







Map 6g: Tripcock Ness to Thamesmead West

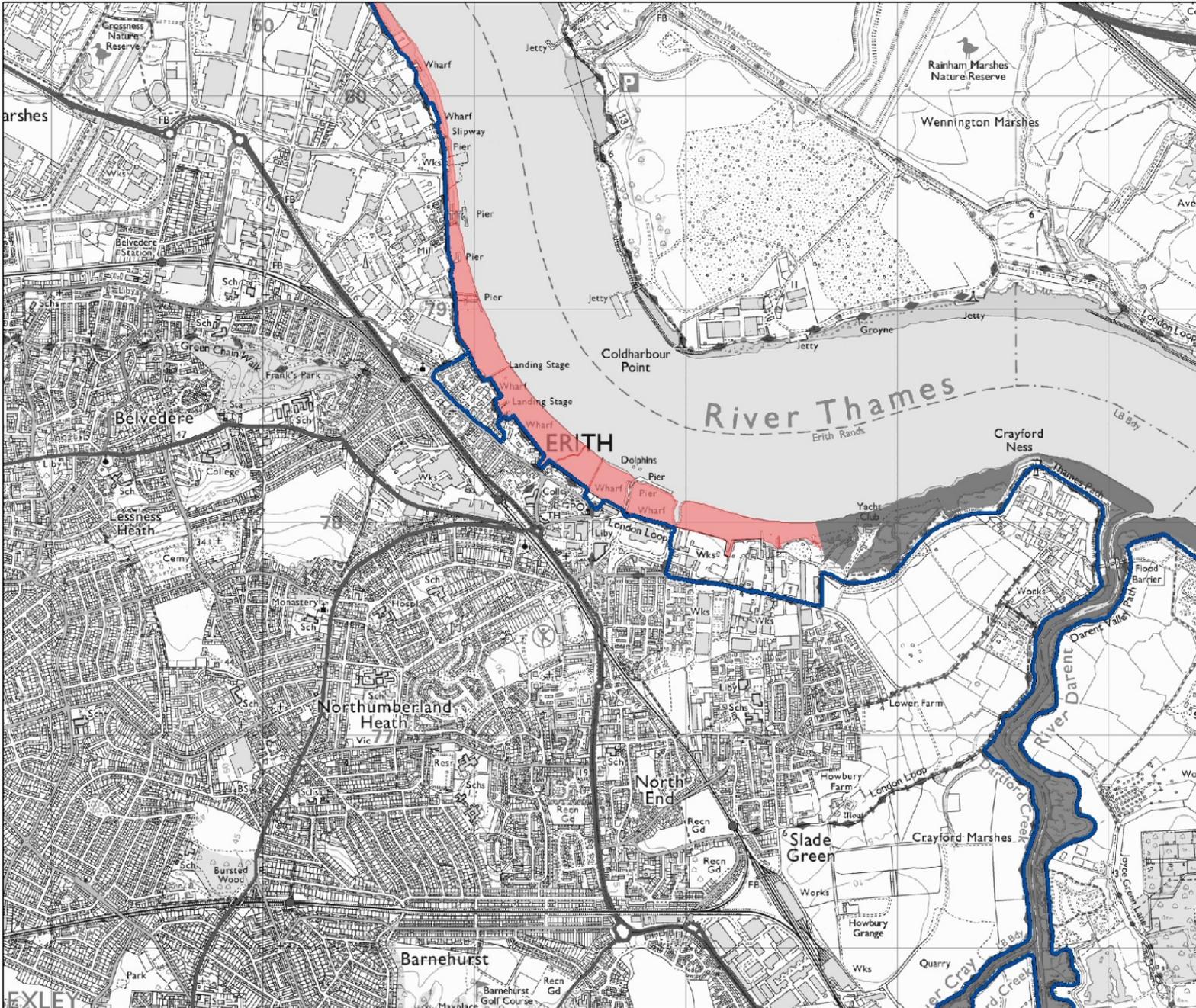


Map 6h: Thamesmead West to Woolwich Foot Tunnel

Coastal Access - Grain to Woolwich - Natural England's Proposals

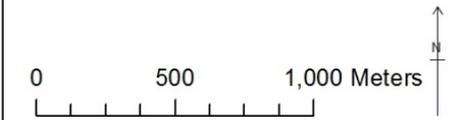
Report GWO 6: Dartford Marshes to Erith Saltings

Directions Map GWO 6A



- Proposed Route
- Directions shown in
- Proposed long-term access exclusion, Unsuited for Public Access, Section 25A, No Public Access, Year

These directions only affect land where coastal access rights apply and will not affect existing rights of access, such as on public rights of way.



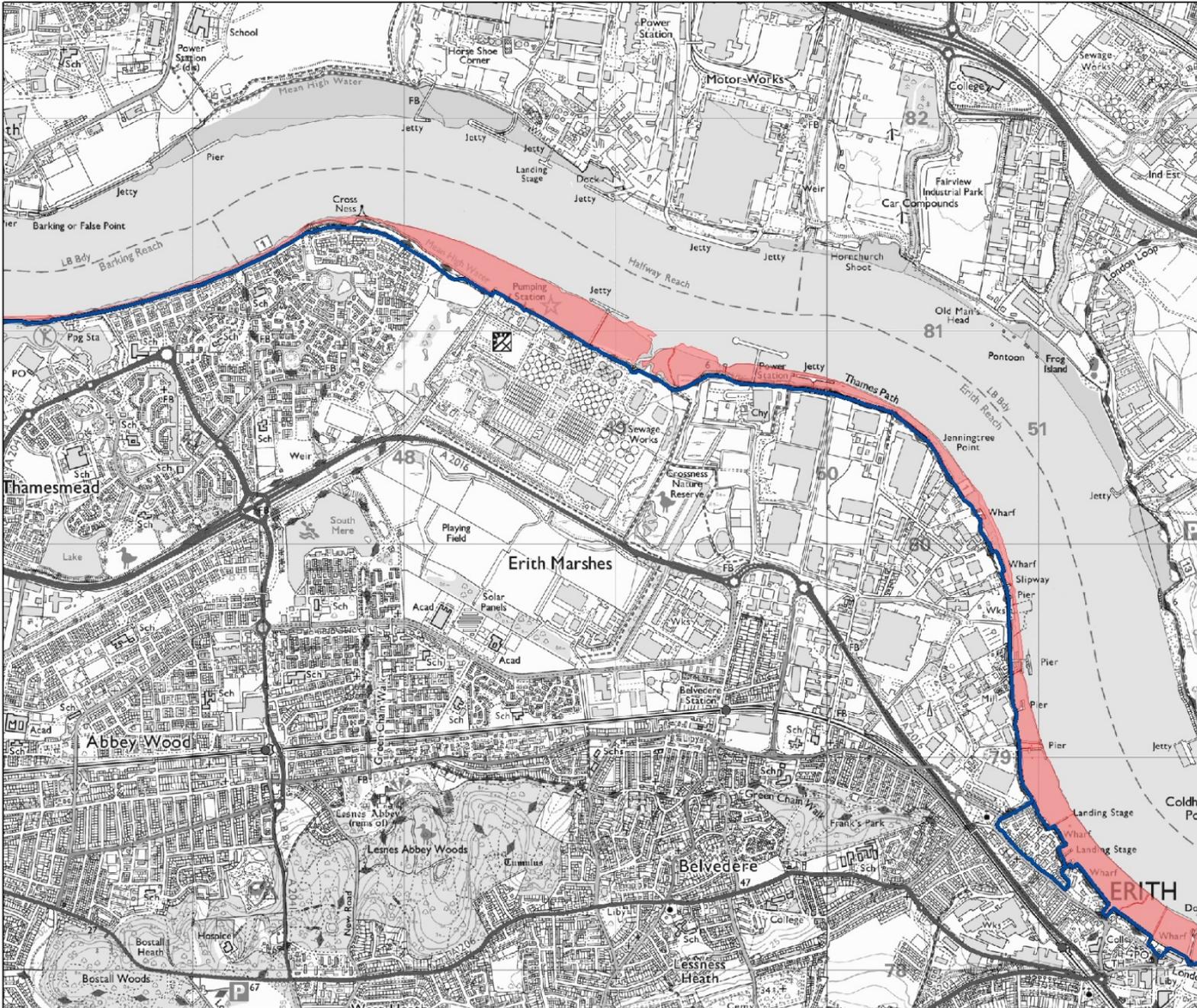
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Directions Map GWO 6A

Coastal Access - Grain to Woolwich - Natural England's Proposals

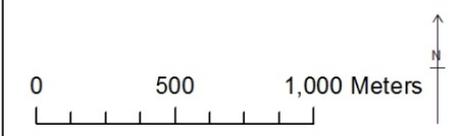
Report GWO 6: Erith Saltings to Woolwich Foot Tunnel

Directions Map GWO 6B

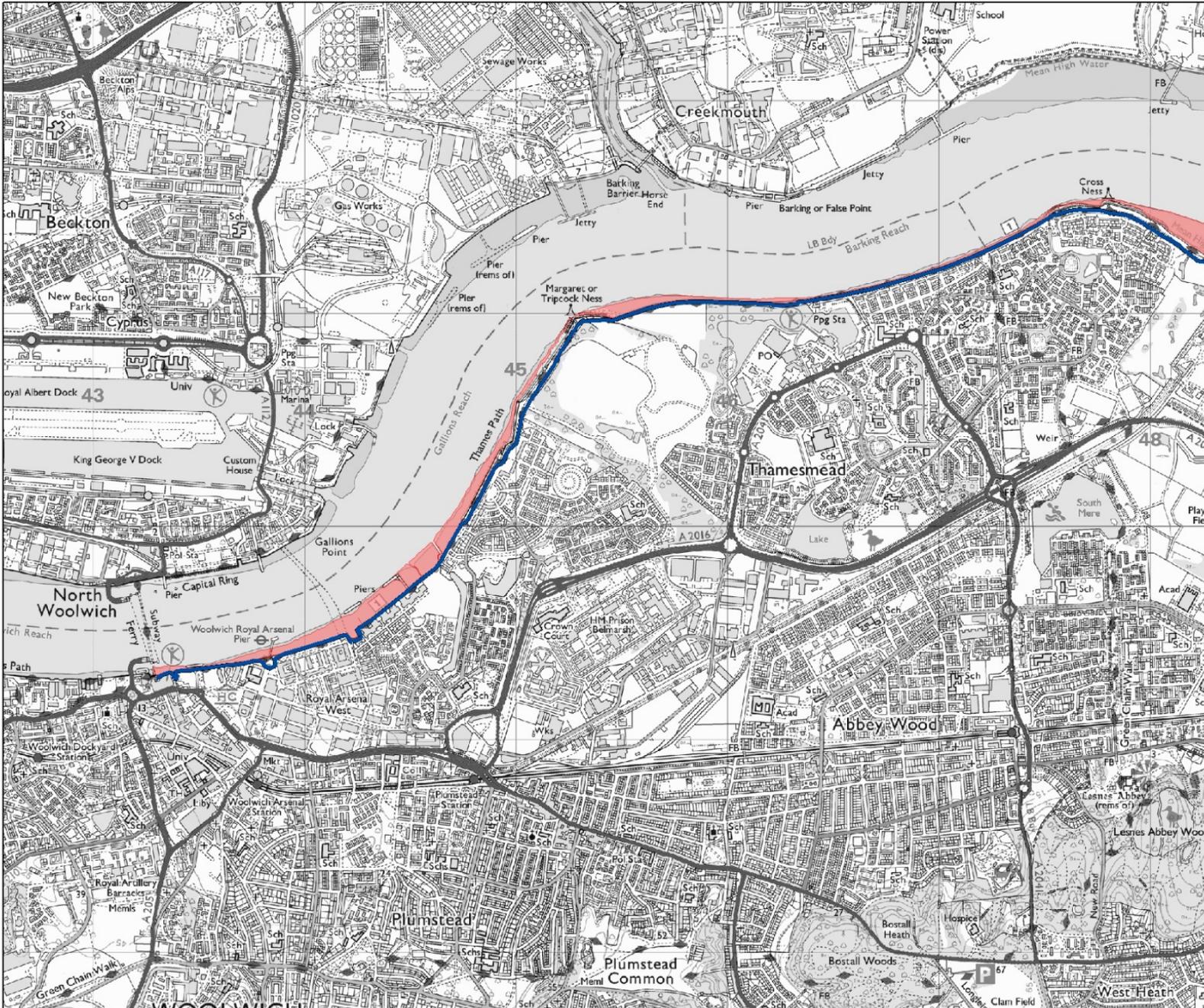


- Proposed Route
- Proposed long-term access exclusion, Unsuitable for Public Access, Section 25A, No Public Access, Year

These directions only affect land where coastal access rights apply and will not affect existing rights of access, such as on public rights of way.

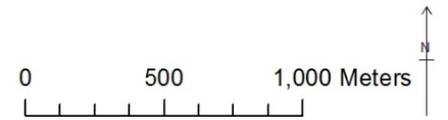


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- Proposed Route
- Proposed long-term access exclusion, Unsuitable for Public Access, Section 25A, No Public Access, Year

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