England Coast Path Stretch: Combe Martin to Marsland Mouth



Report CMM 2: Seven Hills, Ilfracombe to Woolacombe

Part 2.1: Introduction

Start Point:	Seven Hills, Ilfracombe (Grid reference SS 5122 4756)
End Point:	Woolacombe (Grid reference SS 4575 4356)
Relevant Maps:	CMM 2a to CMM 2f

- 2.1.1 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 Combe Martin and Marsland Mouth.
- 2.1.2 This report covers length CMM 2 of the stretch, which is the coast between Seven Hills, Ilfracombe and Woolacombe. 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.
- 2.1.3 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.
- 2.1.4 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 2.2: Proposals Narrative

The trail:

- 2.2.1 Follows the existing South West Coast Path as currently walked and managed along most of this length. See maps CMM 2a to CMM 2f and table 2.3.1 below for more details.
- 2.2.2 Differs from the current definitive route of the South West Coast Path at:
 - Mortehoe (route sections CMM-2-S035 to CMM-2-S039). The trail follows the agreed diversion of the South West Coast Path through National Trust land via Sharp Rock. See map CMM 2f and table 2.3.2 below for more details.
- 2.2.3 Generally follows the coastline quite closely and maintains good views of the sea.

The South West Coast Path

2.2.4 The South West Coast Path (SWCP) generally follows the coast over this length and for the most part we propose adopting the walked line of this route as the line of the England Coast Path. However, there are places where we have proposed improvements to the existing route line, and furthermore there may be 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 and other processes. In both situations, as explained at part 6a of the Overview, assuming these proposals are approved we intend to use a separate variation report to the Secretary of State to change the route of the existing national trail to reflect the approved line of the England Coast Path insofar as the two are different

Protection of the environment:

In this part of the report, we explain how we have taken account of environmental protection objectives in developing our proposals for improved coastal access.

- 2.2.5 The following designated sites affect this length of coast:
 - Morte Point Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
 - Barricane Beach SSSI
 - Bideford to Foreland Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)
 - North Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
 - North Devon Heritage Coast
 - North Devon Biosphere Reserve

Maps C and D in the Overview show the extent of designated areas along this stretch of coast

- 2.2.6 We consider that the coastal environment, including features of the sites listed above, 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.
- 2.2.7 Natural England is satisfied that the proposals for coastal access in this report are made in accordance with relevant environmental protection legislation. For more information about how we came to this conclusion in respect of the natural environment; see the following assessments of the access proposals that we have published separately:
- 2 England Coast Path | Combe Martin to Marsland Mouth | CMM2: Seven Hills, Ilfracombe to Woolacombe

- A Habitats Regulations Assessment relating to any potential impact on the conservation objectives of European sites.
- Our Nature Conservation Assessment, in which we document our conclusions in relation to other potential impacts on nature conservation.

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

Accessibility:

- 2.2.8 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:
 - The trail would in places follow an uneven grass or bare soil path along the cliff top;
 - The trail is undulating, exposed and narrow in places with steep slopes;
 - There are places where it would be necessary to ascend/descend steps. For example at Tors Walks (map CMM 2a, route sections CMM-2-S002 to CMM-2-S003), Bennett's Mouth (map CMM 2c, route sections CMM-2-S018 to CMM-2-S019) and Rockham (map CMM 2d, route section CMM-2-S028).

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

Where we have proposed exercising statutory discretions:

- 2.2.9 **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 fence line, pavement or track to make the extent of the new access rights clearer. See Tables 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 below.
- 2.2.10 In some places such as at Torrs Park, Ilfracombe (map CMM 2a), and Damage Hue to Sharp Rock (maps CMM 2c to CMM 2f) we have used our discretion to propose the inclusion of additional, more extensive landward areas 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.
- 2.2.11 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 4b and 4c of table 2.3.1 and 5b and 5c of table 2.3.2. Where these columns are left blank, we are making no such proposals, so the default landward boundary applies. See the note relating to these columns above Table 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 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.

- 2.2.12 **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.
- 3 England Coast Path | Combe Martin to Marsland Mouth | CMM2: Seven Hills, Ilfracombe to Woolacombe

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.
- 2.2.13 Column 3 of table 2.3.1 and column 4 of table 2.3.2 indicates where roll-back has been proposed in relation to a route section. Where this is the case, the route, as initially determined at the time the report was prepared, is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps CMM 2a to CMM 2f as the proposed route of the trail.
- 2.2.14 If at any time in the future any part of a route section upon which roll-back has been specified needs, in Natural England's view, to change 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 7 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.

On sections for which roll-back is <u>not</u> proposed in tables 2.3.1 and 2.3.2, the route is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps CMM 2a to CMM 2f as the proposed route of the trail.

Other future change:

2.2.15 At this point we do not foresee any 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:

2.2.16 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.

- 2.2.17 Our estimate of the capital costs for physical establishment of the trail on the proposed route is £1,035 and is informed by:
 - information already held by the access authority, Devon County Council, in relation to the management of the existing South West Coast Path;
 - 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.
- 2.1.18 There is one main elements to the overall cost:
 - New signs new signs would be needed on the trail, in particular on route sections where the proposed route differs from that of the existing South West Coast Path. New 'Coast Path' signs are proposed in key coast footpath entry locations at Mortehoe (map CMM 2f) and Woolacombe
- 4 England Coast Path | Combe Martin to Marsland Mouth | CMM2: Seven Hills, Ilfracombe to Woolacombe

Esplanade (map CMM 2f). These will show coastal destinations further afield than the next headland/village. Any signs and information boards with outdated information about the existing route of the South West Coast Path would require replacement

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	£900
Project management	£135

Total £1,035 (Exclusive of any VAT payable)

2.2.19 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, Devon County Council 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:

- 2.2.20 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).
- 2.2.21 We estimate that the annual cost to maintain the trail will be £7,560 (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 2.3: Proposals Tables

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

2.3.1 Details for sections that follow the existing South West Coast Path - Maps CMM 2a to CMM 2f: Seven Hills, Ilfracombe to Woolacombe

Key notes on table:

- 1. Column 2 an asterisk (*) against the route section number means see also table 2.3.3: Other options considered.
- 2. Column 3 '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.
- 3. Column 3 'Yes see table 2.3.4' means roll-back is proposed, but refer to that table below about our likely approach to implementing it for this route section. This is because a more complex situation exists in this case and consideration must be given to how roll-back may happen in relation to excepted land, a protected site etc.
- 4. Column 4a 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.
- 5. Columns 4b and 4c 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 4b, for the reason in 4c. 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 4a, that would be its landward boundary instead.

1	2	3	4a	4b	4c	5
Map(s)	Route section number(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
CMM 2a	CMM-2- S001 to CMM-2- S007	Yes - Normal	No	Hedge bank	Additional landward area	
	CMM-2- S008 to CMM-2- S011	No	No	Hedge bank	Additional landward area	
CMM 2b	CMM-2- S012*	No	No	Hedge bank	Clarity and cohesion	
	CMM-2- S013*	No	No	Road (landward edge)	Clarity and cohesion	
CMM 2c	CMM-2- S014	No	No	Road (landward edge)	Clarity and cohesion	

1	2	3	4a	4b	4c	5
Map(s)	Route section number(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
	CMM-2- S015* to CMM-2- S020*	Yes - Normal	No	Hedge bank	Additional landward area	
CMM 2d	CMM-2- S021	Yes - Normal	No	Hedge bank	Additional landward area	
	CMM-2- S022* to CMM-2- S026*	Yes - Normal	No	Hedge bank	Additional landward area	
	CMM-2- S027	Yes - Normal	No	Hedge bank	Additional landward area	
	CMM-2- S028	Yes - see table 2.3.4	No	Hedge bank	Additional landward area	
	CMM-2- S029*	Yes - see table 2.3.4	No	Hedge bank	Additional landward area	
CMM 2e	CMM-2- S030*	Yes - see table 2.3.4	No	Hedge bank	Additional landward area	
	CMM-2- S031 to CMM-2- S034	Yes - see table 2.3.4	No	Hedge bank	Additional landward area	
CMM 2f	CMM-2- S042 to CMM-2- S044	No	No	Road (seaward edge)	Additional landward area	
	CMM-2- S045	No	No			
	CMM-2- S046	Yes - Normal	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
	CMM-2- S047 to CMM-2- S048	Yes - Normal	No			
	CMM-2- S049	No	No			
	CMM-2- S050	No	No	Path (landward edge)	Clarity and cohesion	

1	2	3	4a	4b	4c	5
Map(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
	CMM-2- S051	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	

2.3.2 Details for sections that differ from the existing South West Coast Path - Map CMM 2f: Sharp Rock, Mortehoe to Woolacombe.

Key notes on table:

- 1. Column 2 an asterisk (*) against the route section number means see also table 2.3.3: Other options considered.
- 2. 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.
- 3. Column 4 'Yes see table 2.3.4' means roll-back is proposed, but refer to that table below about our likely approach to implementing it for this route section. This is because a more complex situation exists in this case and consideration must be given to how roll-back may happen in relation to excepted land, a protected site etc.
- 4. 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.
- 5. 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
CMM 2f	CMM-2- S035*	Public footpath	Yes - see table 2.3.4	No	Hedge bank	Additional landward area	
	CMM-2- S036*	Public highway	No	No			
	CMM-2- S037*	Other existing walked route	No	No	Fence line	Additional landward area	

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
	CMM-2- S038*	Other existing walked route	No	No	Wall	Additional landward area	
	CMM-2- S039*	Public highway	No	No			
	CMM-2- S040* to CMM-2- S041*	Other existing walked route	No	No	Road (seaward edge)	Additional landward margin	

2.3.3 Other options considered: Maps CMM 2b, CMM 2c, CMM 2d, CMM 2e and CMM 2f: Flat Point to Woolacombe.

Map(s)	Route section numbers(s)	Other option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
CMM 2b	CMM-2- S012 to CMM-2- S013	We considered aligning the trail on the cliff tops below the properties at Lee known as Windjammer, Silver Cove and the Blue Mushroom.	 We opted for the proposed route because: The slope below the houses is steep and unstable. The gardens run down to the top of the cliff. As a result there is no way through. This proposal is made with the support of the landowners 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.
CMM 2c	CMM-2- S015 to CMM-2- S020	We considered aligning the trail on the public rights of way which are more seaward.	 it follows the existing South West Coast Path which over time has moved inland to its current route to avoid areas of cliff erosion and ground subsidence. The more seaward route is no longer appropriate or convenient; under our proposals, land seaward of the route 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.
CMM 2d	CMM-2- S022 to CMM-2- S026 and CMM-2- S029	We considered aligning the trail on the public rights of way which are more seaward.	 We opted for the proposed route because: it follows the existing South West Coast Path which over time has moved inland to its current route to avoid areas of cliff erosion and ground subsidence. The more seaward route is no longer appropriate or convenient; under our proposals, land seaward of the route would remain available for people to

Map(s)	Route section numbers(s)	Other option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
			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.
CMM 2e	CMM-2- \$030	We considered aligning the trail on the public rights of way which are more seaward.	 it follows the existing South West Coast Path which over time has moved inland to its current route to avoid areas of cliff erosion and ground subsidence. The more seaward route is no longer appropriate or convenient; under our proposals, land seaward of the route 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.
CMM 2f	CMM-2- S035 to CMM-2- S041	We considered reinstating the cliff top route on the public footpath (the former route of the South West Coast Path) between Grunta Beach and Dunder Hole at Mortehoe.	 We opted for the proposed route because: On advice from Devon Council it was considered too geologically unstable to ever consider re-instating this route The newly created route for the South West Coast Path on National Trust land via Sharp Rock (above Mortehoe), has spectacular views to the north and south and is 'off road' apart from two safe crossings. 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.

Map(s)	Route section numbers(s)	Other option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
CMM 2f	CMM-2- S035 to CMM-2- S041	We considered using the road from the Mortehoe Apartments to Watersmeet Hotel	 We opted for the proposed route because: This road is steep and narrow and does not have a pavement. The newly created route for the South West Coast Path on National Trust land via Sharp Rock (above Mortehoe), has spectacular views to the north and south and is 'off road' apart from two safe crossings. 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.

Note: Any public rights of way not forming part of the proposed trail would remain available for people to use under their pre-existing rights.

2.3.4 Roll-back implementation – more complex situations: Maps CMM 2d to CMM 2e: Bull Point Lighthouse to Sharp Rock, Mortehoe

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Feature(s) or site(s) potentially affected	Our likely approach to roll-back
CMM 2 d and CMM 2e	CMM-2- S028 to CMM-2- S035	Morte Point SSSI	If it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of the designated site whose designated features are sensitive to public access, or where the existing route already passing through such a site must be altered, we will choose a new route after detailed discussions with the relevant experts and with any potentially affected owners or occupiers, which will either (a) pass through the site, if appropriate or (b) if necessary, be routed landward of it.

In relation to all other sections where roll-back has been proposed, any later adjustment of the trail is likely to follow the current feature (e.g. cliff edge/beach) for the foreseeable future as any coastal change occurs.

Part 2.4: Proposals Maps

2.4.1 Map Index

Map reference	Map title
CMM 2a	Seven Hills, Ilfracombe to Flat Point
CMM 2b	Flat Point to Lee Bay
CMM 2c	Lee Bay to Bull Point Lighthouse
CMM 2d	Bull Point Lighthouse to Oreweed Cove
CMM 2e	Oreweed Cove to Sharp Rock, Mortehoe
CMM 2f	Sharp Rock, Mortehoe to Woolacombe

PROPOSALS

Trail Sections

Trail using existing public right of way or highway

Trail using other existing walked route

Trail not using existing walked route

Alternative route

▼ Trail shown on other maps

Approved or open England Coast Path

Maps that show sections of the trail that follow the existing South West Coast Path as currently walked and managed use the following trail categories. Information on the existing status and infrastructure is not shown.

Trail using existing

South West Coast Path

Alternative or optional alternative route using existing South West Coast Path

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

BW - Public bridleway

BY - Public byway

CP - Cycletrack (pedestrian)

CT - Cycletrack (cycles only)

FP - Public footpath

FW - Public footway (Pavement)

RB - Restricted byway

RD - Public road

Coastal Margin

Explanatory note

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 eccess 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.



Coastal margin landward of the trail



Coastal margin landward of the trail which is existing access land

Other Information

Other access rights and routes

Public bridleways

Public byways

Public footpaths

- - · · · Restricted byways

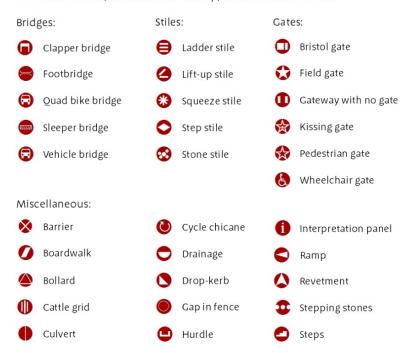
South West Coast Path

--- Sustrans national routes

Existing access land

Infrastructure types

For status of each, where shown on map, see colour codes below



Infrastructure status

Each symbol shown on the map is colour coded as appropriate, as in this example for a set of steps:

Existing steps to be retained

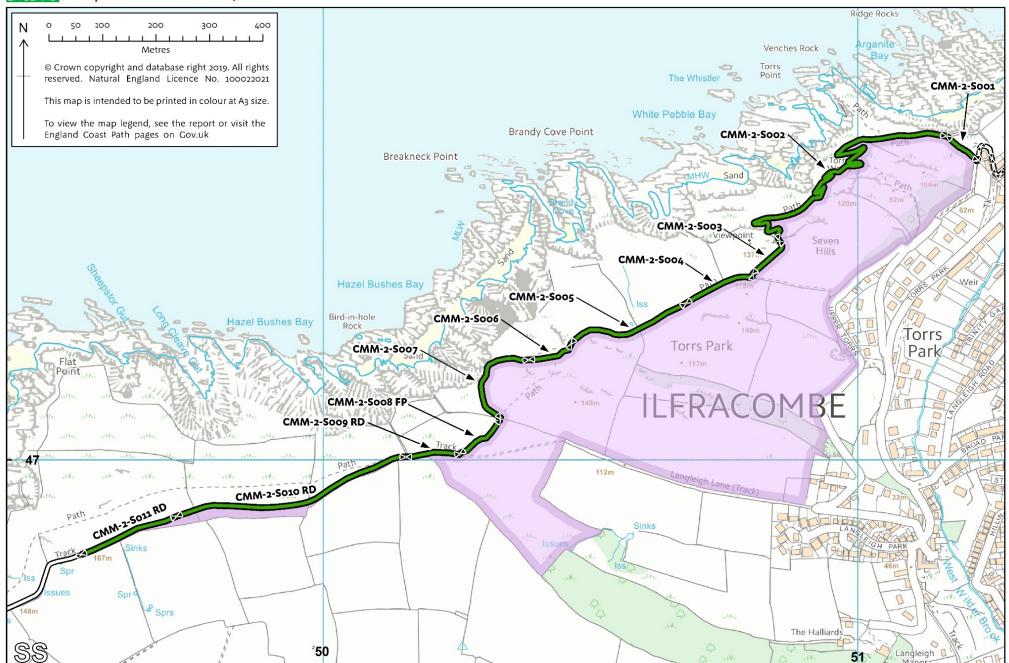
New steps required

 Existing steps to be removed



Coastal Access - Combe Martin to Marsland Mouth - Natural England's Proposals Report CMM 2: Seven Hills, Ilfracombe to Woolacombe

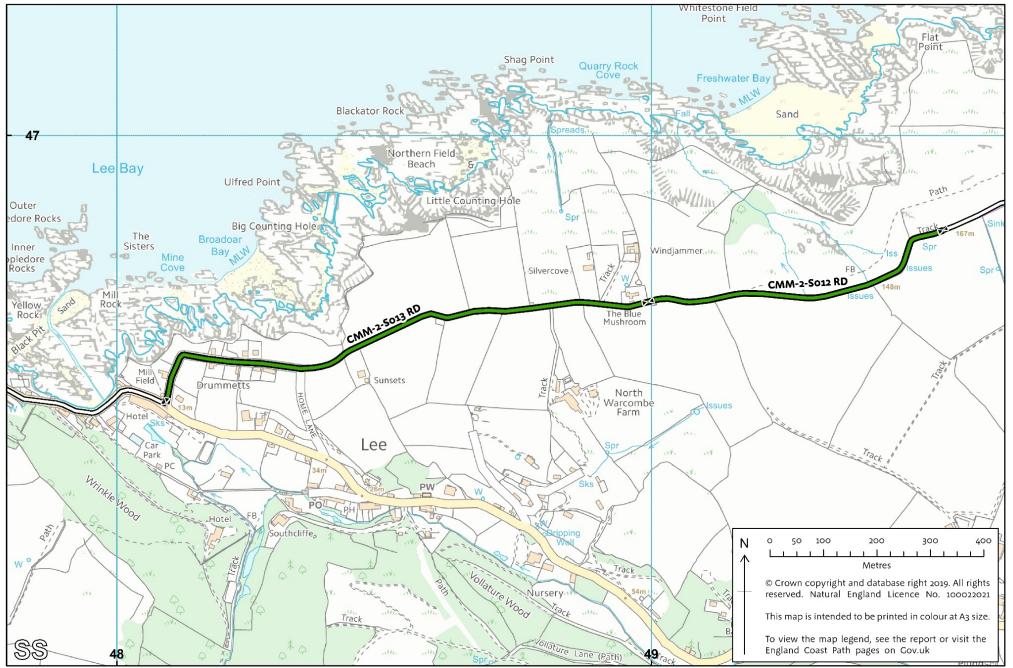
Map CMM 2a: Seven Hills, Ilfracombe to Flat Point



Coastal Access - Combe Martin to Marsland Mouth - Natural England's Proposals

Report CMM 2: Seven Hills, Ilfracombe to Woolacombe

Map CMM 2b: Flat Point to Lee Bay



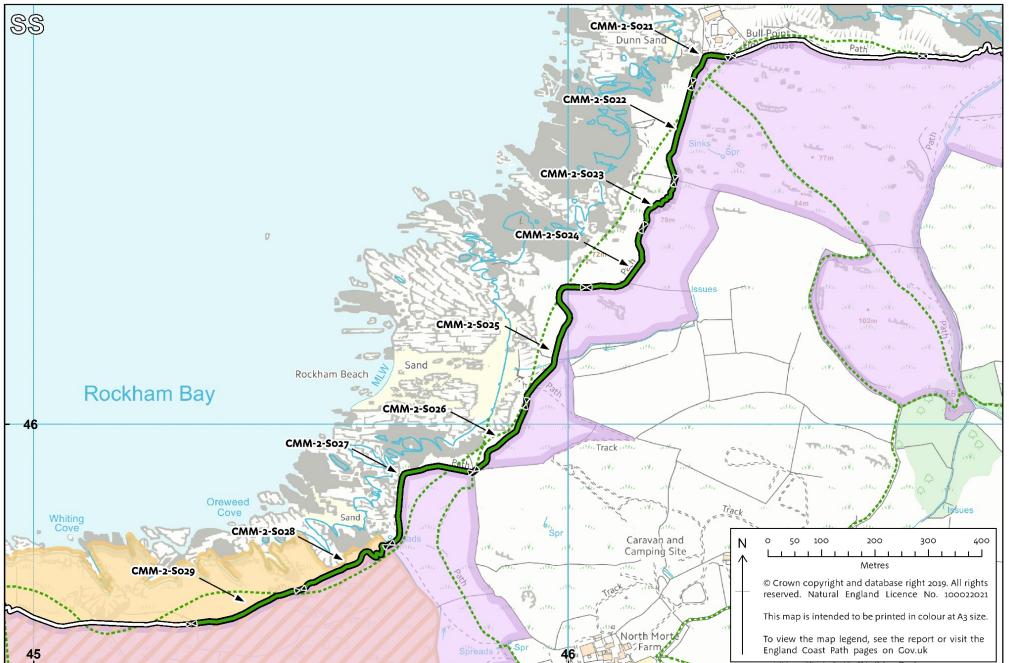
Coastal Access - Combe Martin to Marsland Mouth - Natural England's Proposals Report CMM 2: Seven Hills, Ilfracombe to Woolacombe

Map CMM 2c: Lee Bay to Bull Point Lighthouse





Map CMM 2d: Bull Point Lighthouse to Oreweed Cove

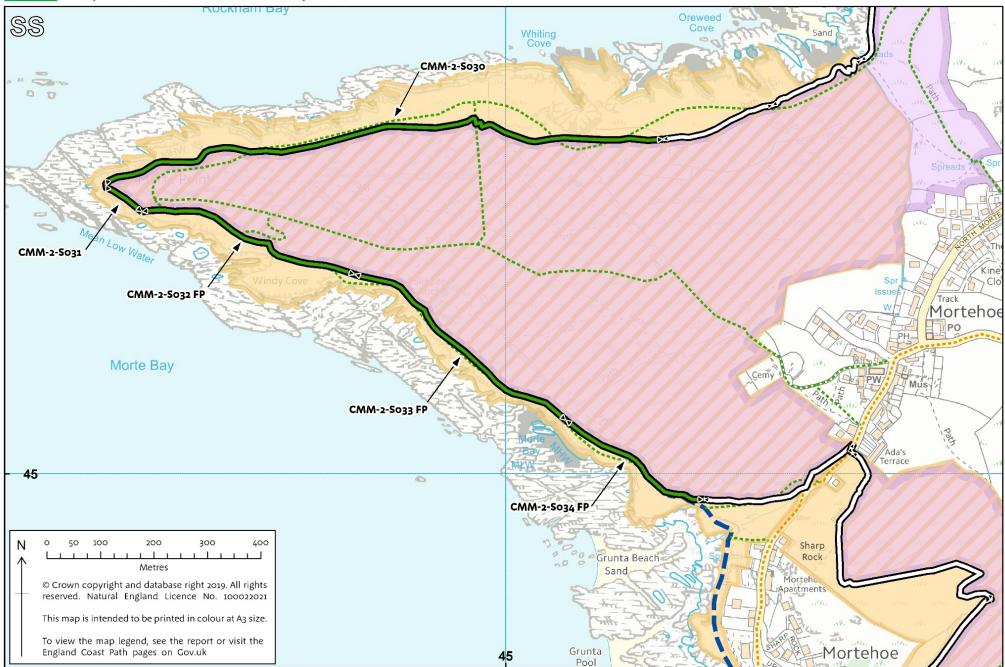




Coastal Access - Combe Martin to Marsland Mouth - Natural England's Proposals

Report CMM 2: Seven Hills, Ilfracombe to Woolacombe

Map CMM 2e: Oreweed Cove to Sharp Rock, Mortehoe





Map CMM 2f: Sharp Rock, Mortehoeto Woolacombe

