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England Coast Path Stretch: Iwade to Grain

Overview of Natural England's statutory reports to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.



Map A: Key map - Iwade to Grain

Report number and title

- IGR 1 Ridham Dock to Kingsferry Bridge (Map IGR 1a)
- IGR 2 Kingsferry Bridge to Raspberry Hill (Maps IGR 2a to IGR 2c)
- IGR 3 Raspberry Hill to Funton Brickworks (Map IGR 3a)
- IGR 4 Funton Brickworks to Lower Halstow (Maps IGR 4a to IGR 4b)
- IGR 5 Lower Halstow to Shoregate Creek (Map IGR 5a)
- IGR 6 Shoregate Creek to Otterham Quay (Maps IGR 6a to 6b)
- IGR 7 Otterham Quay to The Strand Leisure Park (Maps IGR 7a to IGR 7d)

- IGR 8 The Strand Leisure Park to Frindsbury (Maps IGR 8a to IGR 8e)
- IGR 9 Frindsbury to Burnt House Farm (Maps IGR 9a to IGR 9d)
- IGR 10 Burnt House Farm to Stoke Creek Crossing (Maps IGR 10a to IGR 10b)
- IGR 11 Stoke Creek Crossing to Grain Crossing (Maps IGR 11a to IGR 11c)
- IGR 12 Grain Crossing to Grain Esplanade (Maps IGR 12a to IGR 12c)

 Extent of proposals
 Extent of proposals in each chapter
 A road
 B road
 Minor road
 Railway & station



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Report number and title

IGR 1: Ridham Docks (Iwade) to Kingsferry Bridge (Map IGR 1a)

IGR 2: Kingsferry Bridge to Raspberry Hill (Maps IGR 2a to IGR 2c)

IGR 3: Raspberry Hill to Funton Brickworks (Map IGR 3a)

IGR 4: Funton Brickworks to Lower Halstow (Maps IGR 4a to IGR 4b)

IGR 5: Lower Halstow to Shoregate Creek (Map IGR 5a)

IGR 6: Shoregate Creek to Otterham Quay (Maps IGR 6a to IGR 6b)

IGR 7: Otterham Quay to the Strand Leisure Park (Maps IGR 7a to IGR 7d)

IGR 8: The Strand Leisure Park to Frindsbury (Maps IGR 8a to IGR 8e)

IGR 9: Frindsbury to Burnt House Farm (Maps IGR 9a to IGR 9d)

IGR 10: Burnt House Farm to Stoke Creek Crossing (Maps IGR 10a to IGR 10b)

IGR 11: Stoke Creek Crossing to Grain Crossing (Maps IGR 11a to IGR 11c)

IGR 12: Grain Crossing to Grain Esplanade (Maps IGR 12a to IGR 12c)

Using the Key Map

Map A (opposite) shows the whole of the Iwade to Grain stretch divided into shorter numbered lengths of coast.

Each number on Map A corresponds to the report which relates to that length of coast.

To find our proposals for a particular place, find the place on Map A and note the number of the report which includes it.

If you are interested in an area which crosses the boundary between two reports, please read the relevant parts of both reports.

Printing

If printing, please note that the maps which accompany reports 1 to 12 should ideally be printed on A3 paper. If you don't have the facility to print at A3 size, we suggest you print the text of the report you are interested in on A4 paper and view the associated map on your computer screen, using the zoom tool to view it at a suitable size.

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Please read first!

This Overview document sets out the context for Natural England's proposals to improve public access to and along the stretch of coast between Iwade and Grain. It explains key common principles and background underlying the detailed proposals that we make in our compendium of linked but legally separate statutory reports, each covering a single length of coast within the stretch. Each of these reports should be read in conjunction with this Overview.

Taken together, these reports explain how we propose to implement the England Coast Path ("the trail") on this stretch of coast, and detail 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 reports also set 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 (through "roll-back"), if this proves necessary in the future because of coastal change.

So although this Overview has multiple reports associated with it, each report relating to a particular part of the stretch makes free-standing proposals, 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.

We have carefully considered any potential environmental impacts of improving public access to this stretch of coast, and made any necessary adjustments to our proposals prior to publication in order to address these. Considerations in relation to environmental matters are explained in Section 6 of this Overview and relevant reports for each length of coast. Links are provided to relevant separately published documentation where appropriate.

The reports are published on our web pages as a series of separate documents, alongside this Overview and more general information about how the Coastal Access programme works.

Each report is accompanied by detailed **Proposals Maps** for the relevant length of coast. The maps are numbered according to the part of the report to which they relate. For example, maps IGR 2a to IGR 2c illustrate the proposals in report IGR 2, which deals with the length from Kingsferry Bridge to Raspberry Hill.

Introduction

1. Improving coastal access

Natural England has a statutory duty under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 to improve access to the English coast. The duty is in two parts: one relating to securing a long-distance walking route (“the trail”) around the whole coast: we call this the England Coast Path; the other relating to a margin of coastal land associated with the route which, in appropriate places, people will also be able to enjoy on foot. Associated with this duty is a discretion given to Natural England to extend the trail up any river estuary on either or both sides beyond the seaward limit of the estuarial waters¹, as far as the first bridge or tunnel with pedestrian access, or as far as any point between the two.

To secure these objectives, we must submit statutory reports to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs recommending where the route should be and identifying the associated coastal margin. The reports must follow the approach set out in our methodology (the Coastal Access Scheme), which – as the legislation requires – has been approved by the Secretary of State for this purpose.

This Overview and the related compendium of reports relate to the coast of Kent and Medway between Iwade and Grain. Taken together, our report proposals would make the following key improvements to the existing arrangements for access to this part of the coast:

- New sections of coastal path would be created in strategic places to link existing coastal paths into a continuous route along this stretch of coast;
- For the first time, there would be secure statutory rights of public access to most areas of beach, cliff and other coastal land on this stretch of coast;
- The coastal path would be able to ‘roll back’ as the cliffs erode or slip, or when other forms of coastal change occur, solving long-standing difficulties with maintaining a continuous route on this stretch of coast.

This is a significant opportunity to improve public access to this stretch of coast in these ways, with benefits for residents, businesses and visitors. More people will have easier and more extensive access to the coastal environment for open-air recreation, which is widely acknowledged to have significant benefits for human health and well-being.

Once approved and established, this part of the England Coast Path will be managed as part of the family of National Trails.

¹ section 301 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009

2. The determination process

Each of the reports for this stretch is submitted in accordance with our statutory duty under section 296 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 ('the 2009 Act') to improve access to the English coast.

Publication of the reports has been advertised locally and online in accordance with the requirements of the coastal access legislation.

Following publication:

- Any person may make representations to Natural England about any of the reports; and
- Any owner or occupier of affected land may make an objection to Natural England.

In order to be treated as valid, all objections and representations must be received by Natural England no later than the end of the advertised eight week period following publication. The specific closing date appears in the statutory notice for Iwade to Grain, which can be viewed here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/england-coast-path-from-iwade-to-grain-comment-on-proposals> together with more information about how to make representations or objections.

The Planning Inspectorate will consider any objections and any related representations before passing recommendations to the Secretary of State, who in turn will consider both representations and objections and then make a decision as to whether to approve our proposals. Chapter 3 of our Coastal Access Scheme explains these processes in more detail (see Annex A: Bibliography).

The Secretary of State may confirm the proposals in each report in full, confirm some with modifications, or reject some or all of them. If the conclusion is that some modification to our proposed approach is required, further consideration may need to be given as to whether any further environmental assessment is necessary. We may need to prepare an amended report for consideration by the Secretary of State, relating to the part(s) of the coast affected by any rejected proposals. The same procedures for representation and objection would apply to the amended report.

Once proposals for the stretch have been confirmed, there will be a preparation period before the new access rights come into force. This period is to enable any necessary physical establishment of the trail to be carried out and to put in place any necessary local management arrangements (including any approved local access restrictions or exclusions).

Once the preparation period is complete, the rights will be brought into force by order on a date decided by the Secretary of State. Normally one single commencement date is used for the whole stretch. We will publicise the commencement of the rights to ensure they are known about and understood locally.

Parts 2 to 4 of each report explain more about the further steps that will be taken to establish the route, provisions for its future maintenance and the procedures which we will follow to make any subsequent changes that prove necessary once proposals for this part of the coast have been approved.

3. Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps

Before looking at the proposals and accompanying maps, it will help you if you read the following notes and then look carefully at the key to the maps.

Our Proposals:

The proposals are divided into 12 reports, each relating to a particular length of coast on this stretch. Each report is accompanied by detailed maps of the relevant length of coast. The maps are numbered according to the report to which they relate. For example, maps IGR 2a to IGR 2c illustrate the proposals described in report IGR 2.

Each **report** comprises four parts:

- **Part 1: Introduction** – This sets the context for our proposals for that length of coast.
- **Part 2: Proposals Narrative** - This summarises our alignment proposals in general, including any proposed use of our discretions to align the route along an estuary, or recommended changes to the default landward coastal margin. It also summarises the main access management measures that will need to be introduced and the overall accessibility (ease of use for all) of this length of coast, for all users. Additionally, it may identify any future changes of which we are aware that are likely to impact on this part of the coast, and explain how our proposals deal with this change. In each report the Part 2 Proposals Narrative, in conjunction with the Part 3 Proposals Tables and the Part 4 Proposals Maps, sets out our formal proposals to the Secretary of State in relation to the length of coast in question, for which we are seeking approval under section 52 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.
- **Part 3: Proposals Tables** – These line-by-line listings set out in more detail our formal proposals to the Secretary of State for the length of coast in question, and should be read in conjunction with the Proposals Narrative and the relevant Proposals Maps.
- **Part 4: Proposals Maps** – These show in map form the proposals set out in the Proposals Narrative and Proposals Tables.

Part 3 Proposals Tables explained

These notes explain how the various tables found in each report work:

- In the first table or set of tables, we set out detailed information for each section of coast under the following column headings:
 - Map(s) – This column indicates which of the report maps to view alongside the details in the other columns in the same row.
 - Route section number(s) – This is the unique identification number for the route section concerned. In some cases, two or more adjacent route sections will be amalgamated into a single row in the table, if all other displayed details happen to be identical.
 - Current status of route section(s) – This describes the current status of the route we have proposed and whether it has any existing access rights. Public highways, including public rights of way such as footpaths, are excepted from new coastal access rights because the existing public rights to use such highways will remain in force, and the trail is able to make use of these. Other sections of the proposed trail that do not currently have any access rights or where access is currently permitted by the landowner will become subject to new coastal access rights if our proposals are approved. These new rights, and any national or local restrictions on them, will not affect any existing access arrangements for cyclists, horse-riders or other types of recreational user that may currently exist at the local level - for example by formal agreement with, informal

permission from or traditional toleration by the owner of the land, or through any type of pre-existing legal right that remains in force.

- Roll-back proposed? – This indicates whether we propose that, in the event of significant coastal erosion or other geomorphological processes or significant encroachment by the sea, a section of trail which is affected by such factors should be capable of being repositioned in the future in accordance with this formal proposal, without needing further confirmation of the change at that time by the Secretary of State. Roll-back may be used to adjust the trail either in direct response to such changes or in order to link with other parts of the route that need to roll back in response to such changes. The column also indicates whether the ‘roll-back’ requirement is likely to give rise to a normal or more complex change on this section. (In the case of more complex outcomes, further details are provided in the ‘Roll-back implementation’ table). Section 4.10 of the Coastal Access Scheme explains in more detail how roll-back works.
- Landward margin contains default coastal land type? – Certain coastal land types are automatically included in the coastal margin where they fall landward of the trail if they touch it at some point. These coastal land types are: foreshore, cliff, bank, barrier, dune, beach, flat or section 15 land. This column identifies where one of the coastal land types is present in the landward coastal margin.
- Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin – This sets out any proposals for the default landward boundary of the coastal margin on this section to be altered or clarified - see iv below in the Notes on Maps.
- Reason for any proposed use of landward boundary discretion – This provides an explanation for any such proposal to alter or clarify the default margin on this section. This may be either because we are proposing a clear boundary around land that in our view would be margin by default, because it matches the description of ‘coastal land’ explained at paragraph 4.8.8 of the Scheme; or because we propose using our discretion to add land to or remove it from the default margin, as described at paragraphs 4.8.11 of the Scheme.
- Explanatory notes – This contains any additional information which may help further explain the proposal for this route section or group of sections.
- Where there is an alternative route or optional alternative route we set out the details of those routes in a separate table. The table includes columns that describe the landward and seaward boundaries of the alternative route strip. Alternative routes/optional alternative routes have a default width of two metres either side of the approved line. We propose specific landward and/or seaward boundaries to the route strip where doing so would add further clarity to the extent of access rights along the route, by working with the grain of what is already there. It should be noted that where the alternative route/optional alternative route follows an existing path corridor, the trail may adopt a variable width as dictated by existing physical features.
- Each report also includes a table that sets out any other options that were considered during our initial planning (in relation to the route and the coastal margin), and explains why they did not form part of our proposals.
- The final table or set of tables for each report provides further details of any situation where local circumstances mean that implementation of roll-back is likely to be more complex. We identify the key issue and our expected resolution.

Annotated examples of these various tables are given below, to illustrate how they are used.

In each report the Part 3 Proposals Tables, in conjunction with the Part 2 Proposals Narrative and the Part 4 Proposals Maps, set out our formal proposals to the Secretary of State in relation to the length of coast in

question, for which we are seeking approval under section 52 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

Examples of tables found in each report, with explanation of their contents:

Example table 1: Section details

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
ABC 1a	ABC-1-S003	Public footpath	No	No			
ABC 1b	ABC-1-S011	Public footway (shared use)	No	No	Pavement Edge	Clarity and cohesion	
ABC 1c	ABC-1-S018	Other existing walked route	Yes	Beach			
ABC 1d	ABC-1-S045	Other existing walked route	No	Bank	Edge of path	Clarity and cohesion	Top break of slope provides the greatest clarity for walkers

The route section number(s), as shown on the Proposals Map(s).

This column shows whether we are proposing that this route section could be repositioned in future in response to erosion etc. without further approval by Secretary of State. See notes to table. More complex situations are explained in Example Table 4 below.

If column 5b proposes any change or clarification to the landward extent of the margin, this column says why.

This column may offer further explanation of a more complex situation involving the margin.

The relevant Proposal Map(s) for the route section(s).

This column specifies the current access status of the proposed trail section.

We indicate here whether the landward coastal margin for this route section includes a default coastal land type.

This column shows any proposal we are making to align the landward boundary of the coastal margin for this route section with the physical feature shown. 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 column 5a, would be its landward boundary instead.

Example table 2: Alternative routes and optional alternative route details

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
ABC 2a	ABC-2-A001	Public Footpath	No			
ABC 2b	ABC-2-OA001	Public Footway (shared use)	No	Pavement edge	Pavement edge	
ABC 2b	ABC-2-OA002	Other existing walked route	Yes	Fence	Various	The landward boundary corresponds with various features including a wall, fence and bramble hedge.

The route section number(s), as shown on the Proposals Map(s).

This column shows whether we are proposing that this route section could be repositioned in future in response to erosion etc. without further approval by Secretary of State. See notes to table. More complex situations are explained in Example Table 4 below.

This column may offer further explanation of a more complex situation, e.g. involving the boundaries of the route strip.

The relevant Proposal Map(s) for the route section(s).

This column specifies the current access status of the proposed trail section.

These columns show any proposal we are making to align either or both boundaries of the alternative route strip with a physical feature on the ground. No text in either column means that the edge of this section of the alternative route strip would be that of the trail itself.

Example table 3: Other options considered

Map(s)	Section number(s)	Option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
ABC 3b	ABC-3-S011 to ABC-3-S019	We considered aligning the trail along the route of the existing public footpaths through the boat yard and along the flood bank.	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ it offers a safer and more convenient route with a newly created tarmac surface which is accessible to all. ■ it avoids passing through the working area of the boat yard. ■ the surface of the existing footpath along the flood bank is uneven and often waterlogged. <p>Under our proposals, the public footpaths would remain available for people to use but would not form part of the designated trail.</p>
ABC 3c	ABC-3-S017 to ABC-3-S020	We considered aligning the trail along the route of the existing public footpath on the cliff edge around the western edge of Cranham Hill.	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ it avoids increased footfall on the fragile limestone grassland flora which is designated as a SAC and SSSI feature. ■ it is comparable, in terms of the safety and convenience of walkers. <p>Under our proposals, the public footpath would remain available for people to use but would not form part of the designated trail.</p>

The relevant Proposal Map(s) for the route section(s).

The route section number(s), as shown on the Proposals Map(s).

This column describes other options we considered for the route or margin for the identified route section(s).

This column summarises the reason(s) that the other options we considered were not preferred.

Example table 4: Roll-back implementation – more complex situations

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Feature(s) or site(s) potentially affected	Our likely approach to roll-back
ABC 4f	ABC-4-S040 to ABC-4-S045	Super Camp Holiday Village	<p>If it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of the specified campsite, we will choose a new route after detailed discussions with all relevant interests, either</p> <p>(a) to pass through the site, or (b) if this is not practicable, to pass somewhere on the landward side of it.</p> <p>In reaching this judgement we will have full regard to the need to seek a fair balance between the interests of potentially affected owners and occupiers and those of the public.</p>

The relevant Proposal Map(s) for the route section(s).

The route section number(s), as shown on the accompanying map(s).

This column identifies any areas that could cause us to consider a more complex solution to roll back than would normally be required.

This column summarises our expected approach to roll back in these circumstances.

Part 4 Proposals Maps explained

The notes that follow will help explain the maps provided for each report.

The proposed route of the trail:

- i The thickness of the line used to depict the proposed route on the maps is intended to make it easy to find on the map. Different shading on the line differentiates between sections of the route that would use existing rights of way, sections that appear to follow other existing walked lines on the ground, and sections that do neither. The thickness of the line on the map is not an indication of the width of the actual trail on the ground. The proposed route simply follows the centre of the line shown. The legislation makes the default width of the trail four metres, but its actual width varies in practice according to the detail included section by section in our proposals.
- ii In places there are differences between the line of public rights of way recorded on the local Definitive Map that is maintained by the local highway authority, and paths currently used and managed on the ground as public rights of way. Some of these differences may be attributed to adaptation of the path over time to cope with coastal erosion and other processes, whilst others appear to arise from anomalies in the way the rights were originally recorded on the definitive map. The maps in this report show the public rights of way as recorded on the definitive map, and depict them as accurately as possible at the scale used. See part 4.7 of the Scheme for further information.

The coastal margin:

- iii The proposed route of the trail shown on the maps is important in understanding the extent of the coastal margin that would apply to either side of it. Under the legislation:
 - the coastal margin is a single, continuous corridor of land which includes the trail itself;
 - the margin includes all land seaward of the trail land - although not all of that land would be subject to a new right of access (see point vi below);
 - the landward extent of this margin is by default the trail itself, or the inland edge of any land adjoining the trail on its landward side that is foreshore, cliff, dune or beach, or a bank, barrier or flat, or section 15 land (see Annex B: Glossary of terms).
- iv We have the discretion to propose that the landward boundary of the coastal margin should coincide with a recognisable physical feature on the ground – even if the effect of doing so is to add land into the margin, or to remove land from it. We may use this discretion:
 - to propose that instead of the default trail width of four metres set by the legislation, particular physical features such as walls, fences or pavement edges should be used where appropriate to define the landward extent of the trail land on that section of the route: such features cannot be depicted on the maps at the scale used, but they are described in the Proposals Tables;
 - to clarify or adjust the boundaries of a landward area included by default as margin, in order to create a better ‘fit’ with the circumstances on the ground; or
 - to propose in some places that additional areas of land should be added to the coastal margin landward of the trail: land which is affected by such proposals is indicated on the maps with a purple wash and described in parts 2&3 of each report.

Further explanation of these powers can be found at part 4.8 of the Coastal Access Scheme. Our proposals take full account of any views expressed by the owner or occupier of affected land about whether the powers should be used in any of these ways.

- v Land which forms part of the coastal margin would be subject to access rights, other than:

- any **excepted** land, such as land covered by buildings or their gardens or curtilage: Annex C summarises in full the categories of excepted land under the legislation; or
 - any land where coastal access rights would be **excluded** under our statutory powers: we indicate in the report where we already know of circumstances that make this necessary, and make any proposals accordingly.
- vi **Spreading room** is the term used in the reports to describe any land, other than trail land, which would form part of the coastal margin and would have public rights of access. It does not therefore include any excepted land within the margin, or any existing access land on the landward side of the trail that is omitted from the margin.

Annex B (Glossary of terms) includes a full definition of these terms which you may find helpful in understanding the report.

Voluntary access dedication

- vii Land that was previously dedicated as access land under section 16 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) will become subject to the coastal access regime if it forms part of the coastal margin in any of the ways described above. There is also provision in the legislation for a land owner or long leaseholder to dedicate other land voluntarily as coastal margin if it lies adjacent to it or within it. Dedicating land as coastal margin means the excepted land provisions do not apply there and may also be used to relax or remove specific **national restrictions** that would otherwise apply. Parts 4.8.20 to 4.8.23 of the Coastal Access Scheme explain these provisions in more detail.

In each report the Part 4 Proposals Maps, in conjunction with the Part 2 Proposals Narrative and the Part 3 Proposals Tables, set out our formal proposals to the Secretary of State in relation to the length of coast in question, for which we are seeking approval under section 52 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

4. Preparation of the report

To secure the twin objectives under the legislation we have followed the approach set out in our Coastal Access Scheme, as approved by the Secretary of State on 9 July 2013. Chapter 3 of this detailed document sets out the stages of implementation we must follow.

In line with this, before making the proposals in this compendium of reports for the stretch, we conducted extensive preliminary work in two main stages:

- Stage 1: Prepare – defining the extent of the coastal stretch with access authorities and identifying the key issues and opportunities, including sensitive features, in conjunction with key organisations; and
- Stage 2: Develop – checking the alignment on the ground, sharing our initial thoughts with land owners and offering to ‘walk the course’ with them, planning for the protection of key features, talking further with key interests and reality checking our proposals.

Stage 1 - Prepare

This stage involved us working closely with access authorities to develop an understanding of the stretch, agree its exact extent and carry out initial familiarisation visits. We held discussions with representatives of national and local organisations with a strategic interest in this stretch of coast. This included discussions with those we are required by legislation to consult at this stage:

- Medway and Kent local access forums;
- County and District Council officers, including ecology, geology, historic environment, planning, transport and countryside ranger staff;
- local officers from the Environment Agency, in relation to flood defence and coastal erosion management on this stretch of coast;
- local officers of Historic England, in relation to historic features on this stretch of coast; and

We also held discussions with representatives of specific interest groups, including:

- Town and Parish Council representatives;
- the Ramblers Association and Disabled Ramblers Association;
- Medway and Swale Estuary Partnership
- the National Farmers Union;
- the Kent Wildfowlers, and
- the Country Land and Business Association.

We publicised on our website the start of work on the stretch and provided an opportunity for all other interested parties to submit to us their views on local issues and opportunities.

We also engaged with internal specialists and relevant organisations locally – including Kent Wildlife Trust, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Birdwise, Historic England - to consider any potential for impacts on key sensitive features.

In addition to these discussions we took into account a wide variety of information, plans and strategies that we considered relevant to the alignment process. Those that are published on the internet are listed in Annex A: Bibliography.

We then took all reasonable steps to identify owners, occupiers and those with a legal interest in the land which could be affected.

Stage 2 - Develop

This stage involved us contacting, and discussing our initial thoughts with, relevant owners, occupiers and other legal interests.

We asked for their views and invited them to join us when we visited the land to 'walk the course' so that we could discuss options for alignment based on mapped summaries of our emerging proposals.

In most cases this was done through separate site meetings with the individuals and businesses concerned.

We also took reasonable steps to identify and contact any owners, occupiers or other legal interests who could foreseeably be affected in the future as a result of any roll-back that may prove necessary). See part 7 – Future Changes – below.

We then held further detailed discussions with internal and external specialists to refine our thinking on protecting key sensitive features, carrying out any necessary assessments.

After further discussions with key local and national organisations we refined our proposals and checked them on the ground before moving onto Stage 3 – Propose, which is the substance of these reports.

Key issues along this stretch

5. Discretion to include part or all of an estuary or estuaries

The Iwade to Grain stretch includes parts of the estuaries of The Swale and the River Medway.

a) Introduction

This part of the Overview:

- introduces the core statutory duties and considerations for the national programme as a whole in relation to exercising the discretion to include part, or all, of an estuary within our proposals;
- describes the overall nature of the estuary system(s) found in this part of England, identifying the geographical limits of our discretion to align the trail around the part of the Swale and Medway estuaries included within this stretch of coast;
- goes on to explain in more detail how each of the specific estuary considerations set out at section 301 of the 2009 Act affects our view of the options for the Swale and Medway estuaries;
- sets out the options for estuary trail alignment which we have identified as a result of this analysis, and;
- describes and explains our chosen proposal.

b) Estuary discretion

Under the 2009 Act there is no requirement for the trail to extend up any estuary further than the seaward limit of estuarial waters that is explained below under “Geographical limits of our discretion”.

But Natural England has a discretion to propose that the trail should extend from the seaward limit as far as the first bridge over which, or tunnel through which, there is a public right of way, or a public right of access, by virtue of which the public are able to cross the river on foot, or as far as any specified point in between. In exercising its discretion, Natural England must have regard to the core national duties and considerations described in Part B and Chapter 10 of the Coastal Access Scheme.

c) Core national duties and considerations relevant to estuaries

Section 296 of the 2009 Act places a legal duty (the Coastal Access Duty) on Natural England and the Secretary of State to secure a walking route around the whole of the open coast of England, together with an associated margin of land for the public to enjoy either in conjunction with their use of the route, or otherwise.

Section 297 goes on to require both, in discharging this duty, to have regard among other things to the desirability of ensuring that so far as reasonably practicable, interruptions to this route are kept to a minimum. This is a key consideration for the whole of the national delivery programme for coastal access. The whole concept of the England Coast Path relies on delivering continuity of the route so far as reasonably practicable for the whole country. Although proposing a route around each estuary is a discretion rather than a legal duty, if the presence of an estuary would interrupt this **continuity of access** along the open coast then this will constitute a strong prima facie reason for the trail to serve the estuary too, at least to the extent necessary to enable users to continue their onward journey around the coast.

The Scheme notes at paragraph 10.1.4 that because the seaward limit of estuarial waters is an arbitrary point from an access perspective, we are likely to use our discretion at most estuaries to extend the trail upstream to a more convenient point than this seaward limit. Paragraph 10.1.5 then adds “We will always give careful consideration to our option to extend the trail as far as the first bridge or tunnel with pedestrian public access” – both for reasons of continuity, and with a view to any additional recreational benefits that might result within the estuary itself from doing so.

Chapter 10 of the Scheme explains the **statutory estuary criteria** that section 301(4) of the 2009 Act requires to be taken into account in deciding whether or not to include an estuary in our proposals. These are discussed in more detail in subsection **e) and f)** below in relation to the Swale and Medway estuaries, respectively.

The other key considerations, including achieving a fair balance with the interests of owners and occupiers, are discussed in part 6 of this Overview.

d) Overall nature of estuary systems in this part of England

The North Kent coast is characterised by a number of substantial estuaries. This stretch comprises parts of The Swale Estuary and the Medway Estuary. The Medway Estuary and The Swale Estuary form a single tidal system, which joins the southern part of the Thames Estuary between Grain and Minster (Isle of Sheppey) and the open coast between Seasalter and Shellness (Isle of Sheppey).

The Swale is a channel of water that separates the Isle of Sheppey from mainland Kent. It was originally part of a river valley that flooded to form The Swale Estuary. At its western limit, The Swale empties into the Medway Estuary between Deadmans Island, off Chetney Marshes and Queenborough (Isle of Sheppey). The Swale Estuary forms a tidal channel fringed by mudflats and saltmarsh, backed by grazing marsh and some industrial areas which are protected by sea defences. The Medway Estuary is a large estuary with a complex arrangement of tidal channels, which drain around large islands of saltmarsh and peninsulas of grazing marsh. There are large areas of mudflat, and grazing marsh can also be found landward of some sea walls in the area. The area is very flat and low lying, with large expanses of uninterrupted views.

Together the Swale, Medway and Thames estuaries form a belt of estuary systems along the north coast of Kent. For the purposes of our coastal access duty we have divided these estuaries into a number of stretches, with the intention that proposals for each stretch will be published as a series of reports. The overall ambition for this part of the coast is to realise a continuous path that runs along all three of these linked estuaries to join the open coast in Essex with the open coast in Kent. Natural England has already made proposals for the stretch of coast along the Thames Estuary, west of Grain. The Grain to Woolwich proposals were submitted in June 2019. It is helpful to bear in mind this context in reading our analysis of the individual estuaries which follows.

e) The Swale Estuary

Geographical limits of our discretion

The seaward limit of The Swale's estuarial waters runs between a point near Seasalter on the Kent mainland and Shellness on the Isle of Sheppey, as shown on Map A2.

i) Ferry services

There are no ferry services operating on The Swale or any of its constituent tributaries.

ii) Character of the Estuary

Estuary width

The width of The Swale is variable, thereby providing a coastal feel. The estuary narrows significantly, west of Faversham and Oare creeks, with a very narrow section west of Milton Creek. West of Ridham Dock, Iwade, the channel narrows to 470 metres as it empties into the Medway Estuary. Further east, at the mouth of the estuary near Seasalter, it widens out to more than 3 miles/4.8 kilometres. Some of its creeks and inlets east of Ridham Dock, narrow to only 60 metres wide.

Topography of the shoreline

The most prominent feature of The Swale is the Isle of Sheppey which forms its northern shore. The Swale empties into the Medway Estuary to the west, which joins the Thames Estuary between Grain and the Isle

of Sheppey. The Swale also links with the open sea at the eastern end of the Isle of Sheppey between Shellness and Seasalter, near Whitstable. There are several tributaries, including the Faversham, Oare, Conyer and Milton Creeks on the south side of the estuary, all of which are easily accessible to walkers.

Nature of affected land

The land adjacent to The Swale Estuary, is generally composed of grazing marsh, saltmarsh, and mudflats directly adjacent to the seawall. In addition to its tidal nature, estuarial habitats and associated coastal wildlife, walkers can enjoy close-up views of Thames sailing barges, yachts and industrial cargo ships.

The estuary is set in a very low lying rural landscape, and when viewed from a distance, the tidal waters are often hidden by the raised seawalls. Once on top of the seawalls, the unique views across and along the estuary and creeks provide for a strong coastal feel.

Aside from the coastal town of Whitstable, the other larger urban settlements, such as Faversham and Sittingbourne, are found at the southern extent of The Swale tributaries: Faversham and Oare Creek and Milton Creek.

Features of interest

The Swale and its creeks are renowned for their internationally important wintering wildfowl that utilise the saltmarsh and the expanses of mud that are exposed at low tide. The area holds great cultural interest focused around the historic town of Faversham (east of the Iwade to Grain stretch), with its boat building heritage and the annual oyster and nautical festivals.

There are also views across The Swale and out to the Thames that capture how important the North Kent coastline has been over the ages, from the Sea Forts off Whitstable to today's windfarms.

iii) Recreational Benefit

The section of The Swale covered by this stretch flows between Ridham Dock, Iwade and Chetney Marshes. A trail along this section of The Swale would pass Kingsferry Bridge, which provides the only pedestrian access across to the Isle of Sheppey. In addition, a route along The Swale and around the Medway Estuary, would create a continuous route connecting the open coast of Kent with the Grain to Woolwich stretch of coast on the Thames Estuary.

The Saxon Shore Way (SSW) runs along this section of The Swale and any proposed trail could follow a similar route. However, parts of the existing SSW route are unsuitable for a promoted national trail due to road safety concerns, therefore there would be scope to make improvements in that regard.

The western part of The Swale Estuary could be easily accessed via public transport, in particular by using the train station at Swale, near Kingsferry Bridge thereby connecting local people to the coast.

iv) Excepted land

There would be several areas of excepted land along the whole of The Swale Estuary and its tributaries, including residential areas and industry. In relation to this stretch, there would be little excepted land, except near Ridham's industrial area, where aligning a waterside route would not be possible.

v) Options for Swale Estuary

The Whitstable to Iwade proposals, submitted in June 2017, considered an option to stop the trail at Seasalter, at the eastern mouth of the estuary. However, it proposed to extend the route to Ridham Dock, Iwade. In light of these recommendations, the options for the remaining part of The Swale are:

- Option 1 – stop the trail at Ridham Docks, Iwade on The Swale Estuary. This option would not allow an onward connection to the Medway and Thames estuaries, including the stretch of coast within our Grain to Woolwich coastal access proposals. It would create a significant gap in an otherwise

continuous coastal National Trail along the North Kent coast from Margate, to the east, to London and across the Thames to Essex. It would also prevent the additional recreational benefits gained from creating new access around the Isle of Sheppey, accessible by foot across the Kingsferry Bridge.

- Option 2 – extend the trail westwards along The Swale, as far west as Kingsferry Bridge. This option would allow pedestrian access across to the Isle of Sheppey but would not provide the onward connection to the Medway and Thames estuaries and on towards London and Essex.
- Option 3 – align the trail along the southern shore of The Swale to connect with the Medway Estuary at Chetney Marshes. This would allow a continuous route from the open Kent coast to the east (as proposed in the Whitstable to Iwade proposals) along the southern shore of The Swale Estuary, around the Medway Estuary and along the Thames towards London and Essex. This option would also pass Kingsferry Bridge, allowing a continuous pedestrian connection between Kent's north coast and the Isle of Sheppey.

f) Medway Estuary

Geographical limits of our discretion

The limits of the estuarial waters of Medway Estuary are at Grain and Minster as shown on Map A2. The first bridge with pedestrian access is at Rochester.

The statutory estuary criteria

We have considered below each of the section 301 criteria under the headings given in Chapter 10 of the Scheme.

i) Ferry services

There are no ferry services across the Medway Estuary.

ii) Character of the Estuary

Estuary width

The Medway Estuary is a wide, open estuary which narrows significantly upstream of Upnor, thereby providing a coastal feel. The width of the estuary is variable, at its widest it is more than 5 miles/8.2 kilometres wide and narrows to 200m at Rochester Bridge.

Topography of the shoreline

The Medway Estuary has extensive mudflats and saltmarsh along the shoreline and throughout the estuary, creating a number of saltmarsh islands. Muddy, tidal creeks lie between peninsulas of land that protrude into the estuary, particularly along the southern shore at Chetney, Barksore, Upchurch and Motney Hill and the northern shore between Kingsnorth and the Isle of Grain. There are no significant tributaries along the shoreline, with the Medway Estuary emptying into the Thames Estuary in the north, and The Swale Estuary feeding into the Medway Estuary on its eastern shore, between the Kent mainland and the Isle of Sheppey.

Nature of affected land

The western reach of the estuary from Rochester and Frindsbury to Rainham is very urban in nature with large settlements dominating the muddy shoreline.

The eastern end of the estuary from Rainham to Minster (south bank) and Hoo to Grain (north bank) is more rural, with vast tracks of farmland, although there is concentrated pockets of heavy industry, including docks, at Grain and Sheerness.

Extensive mudflats and saltmarsh islands can be found through the estuary giving this area a very coastal feel.

Features of interest

The western reach of the estuary passes through the historic town of Rochester with its Norman castle and the second oldest cathedral in England. Other interesting places around the estuary include Upnor Castle (an artillery fort from 16th century), Chatham Historic Dockyard (a former royal/naval dockyard and now popular maritime museum) and Riverside Country Park (a 100ha coastal park).

The Medway Estuary has been a key military landscape across many centuries. Forts such as Hoo and Darnet, in the west of the estuary, were installed to protect the Medway during the late 19th century. Fort Amherst, based in Chatham, is Britain's largest Napoleonic Fortress.

The estuary hosts many yacht clubs, marinas and boatyards which offer a wide range of moorings that enable the many leisure boats to explore the river, its historic maritime features and the tidal creeks and channels. Alongside this, the estuary is popular with birdwatchers as it supports thousands of wintering and breeding birds.

At Grain, walkers will be able to enjoy the view across to Sheerness on the Isle of Sheppey, and the confluence of the Medway and Thames. Views of the whole Medway Estuary can be clearly seen from a good viewpoint called Tiptree Hill, near Funton Brickworks.

iii) Recreational Benefit

It is possible to walk around much of the Medway Estuary following the existing promoted route called the Saxon Shore Way (SSW). However, there is an opportunity to make significant improvements to the SSW by aligning a trail closer to the coast in many places, for example along the southern shore at Raspberry Hill and Barksore, around most of the coastline of St Mary's Island and along the Hoo Peninsula from Kingsnorth to Grain. Some sections of the SSW are aligned on narrow and increasingly busy roads, so the introduction of the ECP in this area could offer long distance walkers a safer alternative route. Aligning the ECP around the estuary would also provide continuity of access in the area, if in future some of the SSW is discontinued due to increasing traffic and safety concerns

The introduction of a coast path could benefit the residents of the Isle of Grain, by creating a safe walkway along the busy Grain Road, connecting Grain village to the wider Medway Estuary, on foot, for the first time.

Any approved estuary route in the area would be easily accessible to thousands of local people who reside in the major local centres of population, such as Gillingham, Chatham and Rochester. In addition this estuary route could be easily accessed via public transport, as there are numerous train stations along the southern reaches of the estuary such as Swale, Rainham, Gillingham, Chatham, Rochester and Strood. Public buses connect the villages of Lower Halstow and Upchurch with Chatham and connect Rochester with Hoo, St Werburgh and Grain.

In addition, a route along the Medway Estuary and The Swale, would create a continuous route connecting the open coast of Kent, to the east, with the Grain to Woolwich stretch of coast on the Thames Estuary.

iv) Excepted land

There are several extensive areas that would be excepted land along the Medway Estuary, including port and industrial facilities at Sheerness, Medway City Industrial Estate, Kingsnorth and Grain. Where future development occurs in the Medway towns, such as near Gillingham Pier in Chatham, the Local Planning Authority is looking for new waterfront access provision, which would also allow the Coast Path to move closer to the coast for better views.

v) Options for Medway Estuary

- Option 1 – stop at the limits of the Medway Estuary at Grain and at Deadman's Island, Chetney Marshes. This option would leave a gap in the coastal path between The Swale Estuary in the east and the Grain to Woolwich stretch of coastal path on the Thames Estuary to the west. This would

also create a significant break in an otherwise continuous coastal National Trail along the North Kent coast to London.

- Option 2 – align the trail around the estuary, between Deadman’s Island, Chetney and Grain. This would create a continuous route around the Medway Estuary, providing new and safer access at Raspberry Hill Lane, Barksore, Upchurch and the new footway connection to Grain. It would also improve on the existing Saxon Shore Way at Chatham and St Mary’s Island, as well as connecting to the Grain to Woolwich England Coast Path, with links to Essex and London.

Proposed route of the trail

Our proposal is to create a continuous trail along both the Swale and the Medway estuaries i.e. to align the trail, via Chetney Marshes and Rochester Bridge, to Grain (Option 2 for Medway Estuary and Option 3 for The Swale). This fulfils the core objective of the legislation - to create a continuous route around the coast – in a simple and cost effective way. In addition, the vast areas of tidal waters, mudflat and saltmarsh found throughout these estuaries, have the character of the open coast. Also significant is the added recreational and economic benefits of creating a continuous national trail along the North Kent coast (including the Isle of Sheppey) and on towards London and Essex, along the Grain to Woolwich stretch.

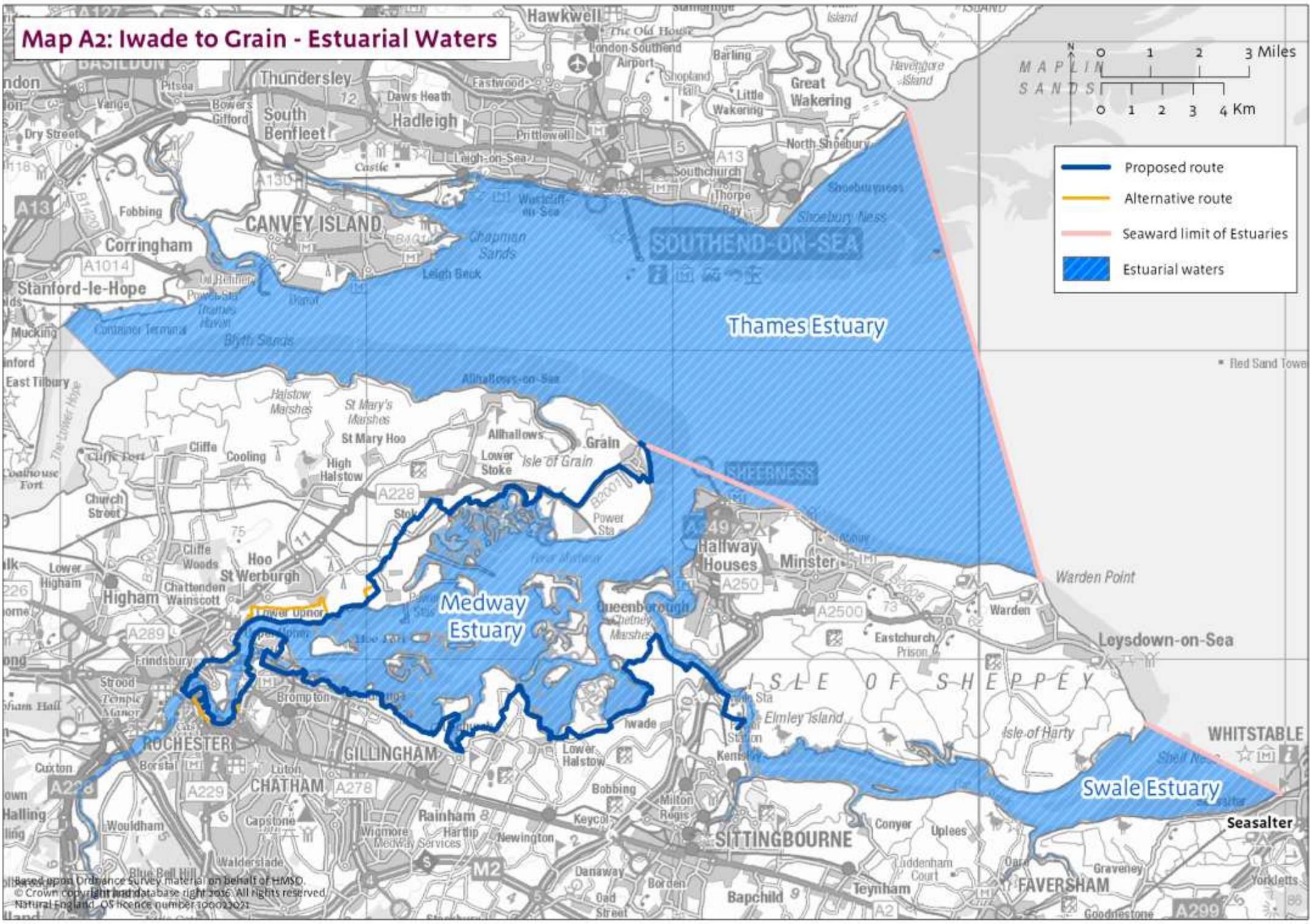
In some areas this will mean proposing a trail inland of commercial and industrial areas. However we are aware that there are plans for some of these areas to be re-development in the future. Some of these developments are likely to incorporate waterfront access and if this is the case Natural England would consider whether it is appropriate to propose a variation to the ECP to bring it closer to the shoreline.

By stopping the route at or short of the limits of the Medway and Swale estuaries (Options 1 & 2 for The Swale and Option 1 for Medway), a gap would be created leaving walkers to determine and explore their own route around the estuary, following the Saxon Shore Way which contains several sections of busy rural roads. In addition, the proposed new access provision at Raspberry Hill Lane, Barksore and Upchurch, as well as the new footway connection between the Isle of Grain and the rest of the Medway Estuary, would be lost.

Map A2: Iwade to Grain - Estuarial Waters



- Proposed route
- Alternative route
- Seaward limit of Estuaries
- Estuarial waters



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6. Other considerations on this stretch

a) Recreational Issues

We have considered interrelationships between our proposals and Kent County Council's and Medway Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIP). Our proposals will supplement the ambitions described in these plans by enhancing the provision of access at the coast including delivering some of the targets in the ROWIPs of improved signposting and waymarking, making path surface and drainage improvements, and avoiding people having to walk on busy roads.

Map B gives an overview of existing public access to the Medway and Swale estuaries between Iwade and Grain, showing public rights of way, access land and the SSW long distance walking. There is no existing access land connecting to this stretch.

The SSW and other permissive access rights already afford relatively good coastal access from Motney Hill to Hoo St Werburgh as can be seen on Map B: Existing Access Iwade to Grain. However, there are areas where the SSW moves inland away from the coast. Along the southern shore of the Medway Estuary there are examples of this at Chetney Marshes, between Raspberry Hill and Lower Halstow and between Ham Green, Upchurch and Motney Hill. In the Medway towns, the SSW currently moves inland through the urban and industrial areas, and on the northern shore of the estuary, the promoted SSW moves inland at Hoo. There are some existing coastal and inland public rights east of Hoo, but with limited connectivity towards the Isle of Grain – and a significant gap in safe access at the A228, where the lack of a pavement prevents safe pedestrian access towards Grain village.

Some of these existing inland routes have been replicated by the proposed Coast Path alignment, due to wildlife sensitivities or land management/ industry requirements on the southern shore, particularly at:

- Chetney (see report IGR 2), Ham Green (see report IGR 6), Motney Hill (see report IGR 7) and at Chatham Docks and Frindsbury's industrial estate (see report IGR 8) and Kingsnorth and Grain industrial complexes on the northern shore of the estuary (see reports IGR 10 & 12).

However, at certain locations, the proposals are able to bring the Coast Path closer to the sea and provide some better views of the coast in the following locations:

- between Raspberry Hill and Lower Halstow (see reports IGR 3 and IGR 4), near Upchurch (see report IGR 6), in the Medway towns which includes a route around St Mary's Island (see report IGR 8), whilst also creating a safe and continuous route from Kingsnorth into Grain village (see reports IGR 10 to 12).

Several sections of the existing SSW are aligned on rural roads. The trail was adopted in the 1980's and since then there has been significant changes in the type and frequency of traffic using these, sometimes narrow, roads. In light of this, Kent County Council advised that it would be unsuitable to align a promoted national trail along certain sections of the SSW, including parts of Raspberry Hill Lane (see report IGR 4) and Horsham Lane, near Upchurch (see report IGR 6). At the western edge of the Isle of Grain, Medway Council advised against walking alongside the A228, and also advised on some highway improvements to the Grain level crossing nearby. Improvements made for the safety of walkers on the Isle of Grain are described in report IGR 11.

Whilst our proposals have been able to deliver many improvements asked for by local user groups during our initial consultation, for instance improved safety, some of the aspirations of local users have not been addressed fully in our proposals, for reasons set out elsewhere in the report:

- establishment of a coastal path along the periphery of Chetney Marshes, giving visual access to Napoleonic sites off this coast and the periphery of Barksore and Horsham Marshes near Upchurch (see reports IGR 2,3 & 4);

- establishment of a coastal path through the Chatham Historic Dockyard, within the Medway towns (see report 8);
- establishment of a coastal path through the Kingsnorth industrial area to link with the public right of way south of Lower Stoke (see report IGR 10)
- Establishment of a new path through the Grain industrial area that avoids the A228 (see report IGR 12)

b) Protection of the environment

As a result of the proposals described in this Overview and associated reports for each length of coast, the quality of coastal paths will be improved and there will be greater certainty and clarity about the rights people have within the coastal margin. Use of the coast for outdoor recreation can, if not carefully managed, add to environmental pressures such as the presence of people causing disturbance to wildlife or new paths leading to removal and fragmentation of habitat. Part of the process we go through on each length of coast when we are developing our detailed proposals is about finding ways to avoid or reduce such impacts, and ensure compliance with legislation to protect the environment.

The creeks, mudflats, saltmarsh and grazing marshes of the Medway and Swale estuaries support a wealth of wildlife. Map C Key statutory environmental designations – Iwade to Grain shows the extensive network of nationally and internationally important sites for wildlife, along the Medway and Swale estuaries, which include Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Marine Conservation Zones and Special Protection Areas. A key feature for the Thames, Swale and Medway estuaries as a whole is that during the winter months, they support internationally recognised populations of non-breeding waterbirds. The extensive areas of soft mud exposed at low tide provide the main feeding areas but the birds also need suitable undisturbed places to roost and several species use inland areas that provide supporting habitat for feeding and resting. A recreational management strategy has been developed by the North Kent Environmental Planning Group in connection with the Local Plans for Canterbury, Dartford, Gravesham, Medway and Swale local authorities. The strategy will be implemented over the Local Plan period and incorporates strategic access management and monitoring, which is now branded as Bird Wise, designed to avoid effects of increased visitors and urbanisation which arise from additional housing near a European site. We have worked closely with the Bird Wise team in developing our proposals so that coastal access is compatible with their approach to managing recreation.

The Medway Estuary bears the marks of a long and distinctive history. The emergence of Chatham as a royal dockyard saw the militarisation of the Medway Estuary with numerous forts guarding Chatham from the land and others on the islands in the Medway to defend the sea approaches. Later conflicts, especially the First and Second World Wars further militarised the Medway Estuary with additional land and sea defences being constructed as well as anti-tank ditches and pillboxes.

For much of history, the sea level was lower than it is today and the estuary was more open to exploitation and transportation. As a result, there has been a long history of human activity in the middle of the Medway Estuary. Most of the islands and marshes in the estuary have been extensively used at different times in history including, prehistoric trackways and enclosures, iron-age and roman pottery and salt manufacture sites.

Remnants of the military defences, and evidence of the extensive human activity in the Medway Estuary, survive, and some of which are now Scheduled Monuments (see Map D: Key statutory landscape designations - Iwade to Grain).

In developing our detailed proposals for coastal access we have taken account of environmental protection objectives and these are, where relevant, discussed in more detail in the relevant report for each length of coast and the following documents that we have published separately:

- A single Habitats Regulations Assessment [<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/england-coast-path-from-ivade-to-grain-comment-on-proposals>] relating to any potential impact on the conservation objectives of affected sites from the proposals we make in each report for the stretch. This assessment considers any potential impacts in relation both to the individual length of coast covered by each report, and to the stretch as a whole.
- Our Nature Conservation Assessment [<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/england-coast-path-from-ivade-to-grain-comment-on-proposals>] for the stretch, in which we document our conclusions in relation to any other potential impacts on nature conservation.

c) Interests of owners and occupiers

In discharging our coastal access duty we must aim to strike a fair balance between the interests of the public in having rights of access over coastal land, and the interests of owners and occupiers of land over which any coastal access rights would apply. This was a key driver in the design of our proposals, which were discussed in detail with the owners and occupiers of the affected land during ‘walking the course’ and other processes.

Many of the issues raised are to a large extent addressed by the provisions in the legislation for particular categories of land to be automatically excepted from the coastal access rights – including land covered by buildings and their curtilage and land used as a garden. Land which becomes subject to development in the future will also become excepted from the coastal access rights if it is developed in these ways. Annex C: Excepted land categories sets out these provisions in more detail. In addition, land subject to the new coastal access rights benefits from the lowest level of occupiers’ liability known under English law.

In general the existing public access provisions are already managed effectively alongside adjacent land uses, but there are places where we have been able through discussion with relevant interests to identify small adjustments to the existing coastal route which better integrate recreational benefits with the interests of owners and occupiers. These are described in the relevant report.

‘Rural coasts – Kingsferry Bridge to the Strand Leisure Park, Hoo and Stoke’

The coast from Kingsferry Bridge to the Strand Leisure Park (reports IGR 2 to IGR 7) and the stretch between Hoo and Stoke (reports IGR 9 to IGR 11) is predominately rural in character.

The main concerns raised by owners and occupiers on the rural coast were:

- Disturbance to wintering and breeding birds as well as other habitats and wildlife, particularly at Chetney Marshes, Barksore Marshes, Horsham Marsh and Motney Hill;
- Public safety implications from:
 - accessing the intertidal area at Chetney Marshes;
 - interactions with wildfowling at Chetney Marshes, Raspberry Hill, Barksore, and Horsham Marsh;
 - crossing roads with reduced visibility at Raspberry Hill Lane;
 - interactions with working sailing clubs and fishing lakes at Kingsferry Bridge, Lower Halstow, Hoo and Horsham Lakes, near Upchurch;
 - interactions with historic landfills at Admiralty Tip, near Upchurch and on the operational sewage treatment plants at Motney;
 - creating a new pedestrian crossing over the railway line at Stoke;

- Antisocial/illegal activity, such as fly-tipping, at sites near Raspberry Hill Lane, Barksore, Bayford, land south of Horsham Marsh and Admiralty Tip, near Upchurch;
- Privacy and security concerns at land south of Raspberry Hill Lane, Barksore, Lower Halstow seawall, commercial orchards and pony livery in Ham Green, land south of Horsham Marsh, mobile home park, near Otterham Quay and at the Microlite Airstrip at Stoke;
- Impact on sporting activities, such as shooting, at Raspberry Hill, Barksore and near Upchurch at Horsham Farm, land south of Horsham Marsh and Horsham Marsh;
- Impacts from dogs fouling, dogs off lead and concerns over attacks on livestock at Barksore, Bayford, Horsham Marsh, land south of Horsham Marsh, Upchurch and a mobile home park and hay field near Otterham Quay;
- Concerns about long term maintenance of new infrastructure at land south of Raspberry Hill Lane, Barksore, Admiralty Tip, near Upchurch and mobile home park near Otterham Quay;
- Maintaining safety and security for organised youth camps near Horsham Marsh, Upchurch;
- Impact on agricultural businesses and farm payments at Barksore.

The concerns about disturbance to wintering and breeding birds, and other habitats and wildlife have been discussed in the Habitats Regulations Assessment and Nature Conservation Assessment (see Protection of the Environment, above) and addressed as part of our proposals. The other concerns raised by the owners and occupiers have been addressed through: careful route alignment and the provision of new infrastructure (such as clear waymarking/signs and gates) to help guide walkers along the trail; public access restrictions and exclusions where necessary for land management and safety, and the use of specialist advice from Kent Highways, Medway's Road Safety Team, Environmental Health at Swale Borough Council as well as agri-environment and conservation specialists.

'Urban coast – The Strand Leisure Park to Upnor and Grain Coastal Park'

The coast between The Strand Leisure Park and Upnor (reports IGR 7 to IGR 9) and at Grain Coastal Park (report IGR 12) are predominately urban in character and provides good sea views.

The main issues raised by owners and occupiers on the urban coast were:

- Privacy and security concerns at land near Victory Pier;
- Maintaining the existing access controls at St Mary's Island, Chatham Historic Dockyard, Medway Council offices and Upnor Castle that are in place for security and public safety;
- Securing a route for the Coast Path around ongoing developments at Sun Pier and Rochester Riverside.

Many of the issues raised are to a large extent addressed by the provisions in the legislation for particular categories of land to be automatically excepted from the coastal access rights. The other issues raised above have been addressed by: careful route alignment, including the provision of a night-time alternative route at Medway Council offices and a longer term alternative route at Rochester Riverside (see report IGR 8); applying public access restrictions and exclusions, and the provision of new infrastructure (such as waymarking) to guide walkers.

'Industrial Coast – Ridham Dock, Kingsnorth and Grain'

The coast at Ridham Dock, Kingsnorth and Grain (reports IGR 1, IGR 10 and IGR 12 respectively) is predominately industrial. There is minimal access to the coast because of the proliferation of wharf frontages and there are currently limited estuary views for large parts of this coastline.

The main concerns raised by owners and occupiers on the industrial coast were:

- Operational, security and public safety concerns of increased access within industrial estates at Ridham Dock, Kingsnorth and Grain Industrial Estates.
- Ability to re-develop the industrial estate in the future at Kingsnorth and maintain the no-access policy along the northern coast of the industrial park (condition of past planning permission).
- That the introduction of the ECP would bring with it increased liabilities that would affect in particular the heavily industrial areas at Grain.
- Public safety concerns from increasing visitor numbers using Grain Rail Crossing, and walking on or adjacent to the A228 road at Grain.

Many of the issues raised are to a large extent addressed by the provisions in the legislation for particular categories of land to be automatically excepted from the coastal access rights. The other concerns have been addressed by: careful route alignment landward of the industrial estates; creating new safe footways and crossing points, and installing clear waymarking/signs and gates. We also sought further advice from Kent Highways and Medway's Road Safety Team to support our decision making.

d) Coastal processes

The principal sources of information regarding coastal processes on this stretch of coast are the Thames Estuary 2100 Plan and the Medway Estuary and Swale Flood and Coastal Risk Management Strategy (MEASS), which are non-statutory policy documents for the management of flood risk and coastal erosion (see Annex A: Bibliography). With reference to these documents, and with advice from the Environment Agency and officers from relevant local authorities, we have identified the parts of the coast within this stretch which are particularly susceptible to coastal erosion or other geomorphological processes, such as landslips.

In general where the coast is defended with some certainty, we have not made any specific proposals to enable the trail to adapt to coastal change - for example, where the trail would be:

- on, or on the landward side of sea defences which would protect it; or
- landward of the roads and railway and industrial areas which would be protected under the policies set out in the Thames Estuary 2100 Plan or the MEASS strategy.

However, in some cases we have identified a possible requirement for roll-back even in scenarios like this, to ensure that we can maintain continuity of the trail should a nearby section of the trail be affected by coastal change (see Part 4.10 of the approved Scheme).

Much of the low lying, rural coastline of the stretch between Chetney Marshes and Motney Hill (reports IGR 2 to IGR 7) is defended by earth embankments (seawalls), along which the trail is partly aligned. From Cockham Wood to Hoo (report IGR 9) there is a naturally eroding coastline. As part of the MEASS, the Environment Agency has proposed managed realignment at Chetney Marshes and Hoo as well as allowing the coastline at Cockham Wood to erode naturally. In addition, they have proposed no future management of several sections of seawall at Raspberry Hill, Barksore Marshes and between Halstow Creek and Motney Hill, which may mean that these defences become overtopped or flooded in the future, and therefore unsuitable for a path. For a significant portion of the route between Chetney Marshes and Motney Hill and between Cockham Wood and Hoo, we have proposed that the trail is able to roll back in line with these coastal management policies. Here, the trail would be able to move inland so that it can be repositioned without further reference to the Secretary of State, once she has approved the initial route. There is more detail about these roll back arrangements in part 7 of the Overview and in the relevant reports.

In areas where the trail is either on higher ground, or where the Environment Agency has proposed to maintain existing sea defences, we have not proposed roll back, for example near Lower Halstow and Funton.

Much of the urban coastline from Riverside Country Park to Lower Upnor and Grain Coastal Park (reports IGR 7 to IGR 9 and IGR 12) are largely fronted by hard defences where the Environment Agency will take action so that flood risk does not increase in the foreseeable future. In general along the urban coastline, we have not made any specific proposals to enable the trail to adapt to coastal change. However, there are a few exceptions where we have proposed roll back: near the Strand Leisure Park, where a new defence is proposed but the exact locations are still being finalised; at Grange where managed realignment is proposed; and at St Mary's Island and Grain Coastal Park, where the trail is aligned seaward of the coastal defence and may be affected by flooding in the future.

The industrial coastline at Ridham Dock, Kingsferry Bridge, Kingsnorth and Grain is largely fronted by hard defences or embankments. The Environment Agency will take action so that flood risk does not increase in the foreseeable future. We have not made any specific proposals to enable the trail to adapt to coastal change on these lengths of coast.

e) Other substantive issues

The Medway Estuary contains a number of features from its long naval history, including Fort Darnet and Hoo Fort, which are situated on islands either side of the main Medway channel. Under the 2009 Act, islands are excluded from the scope of the coastal access arrangements unless it is possible to walk to them from the mainland or from another accessible island. Although situated on mudflats which are exposed at certain times each day, Hoo Fort does not fall within the coastal margin as it is surrounded by a permanent water channel which cuts it off from the mainland.

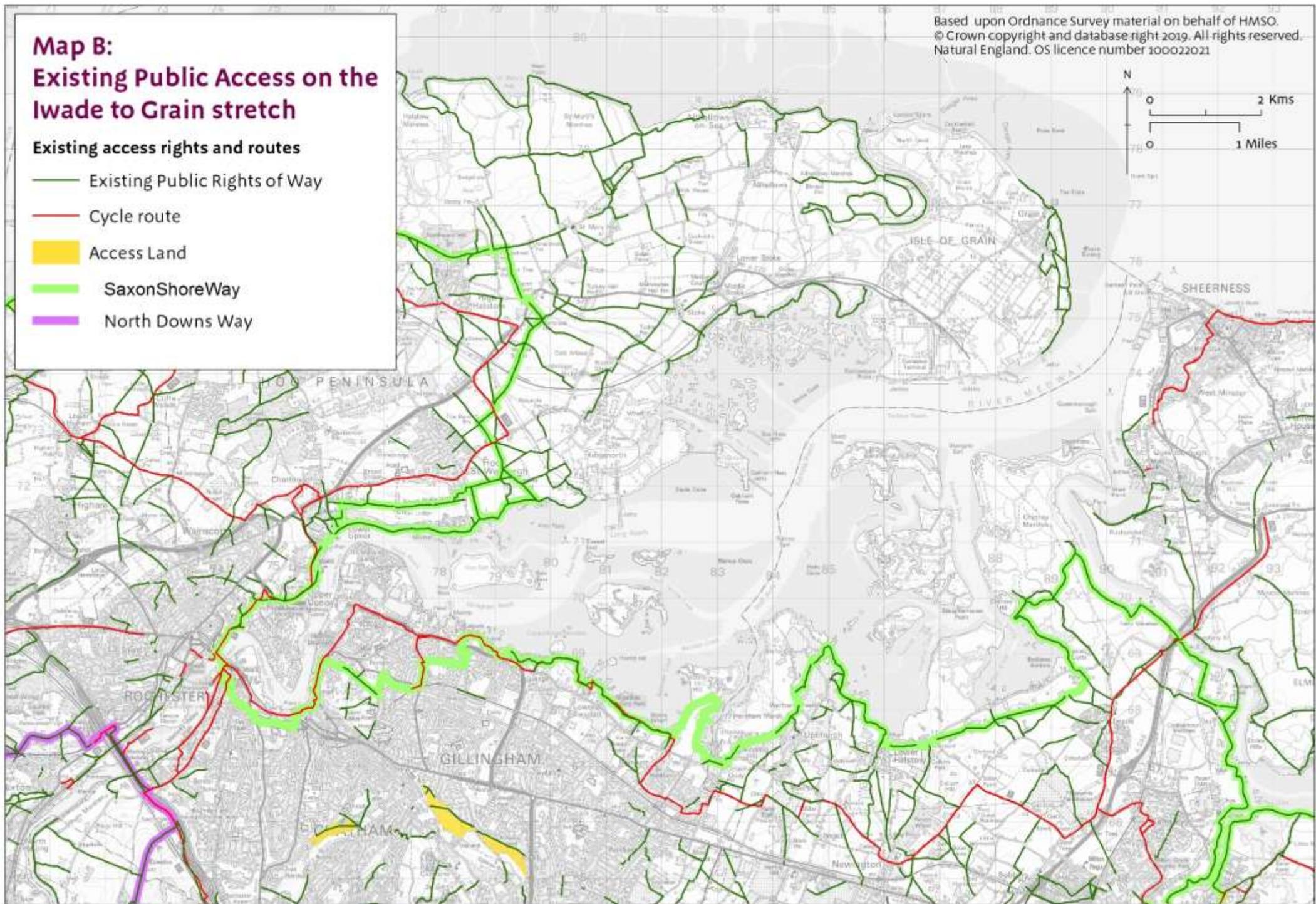
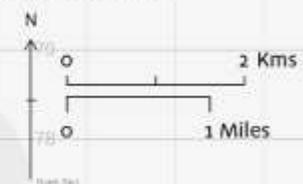
There are also a number of areas of exposed and low lying saltmarsh within the estuary, separated from the shoreline by mud flats, such as Deadman's Island and Nor Marsh. After consultation with the Coastguard and the RNLi, we consider access to and across these 'islands' would also be dangerous and, for clarity, have exercised Natural England's discretion to exclude access rights to these saltmarsh areas and the surrounding mudflats (see Section 8).

Map B: Existing Public Access on the Iwade to Grain stretch

Existing access rights and routes

- Existing Public Rights of Way
- Cycle route
- Access Land
- SaxonShoreWay
- North Downs Way

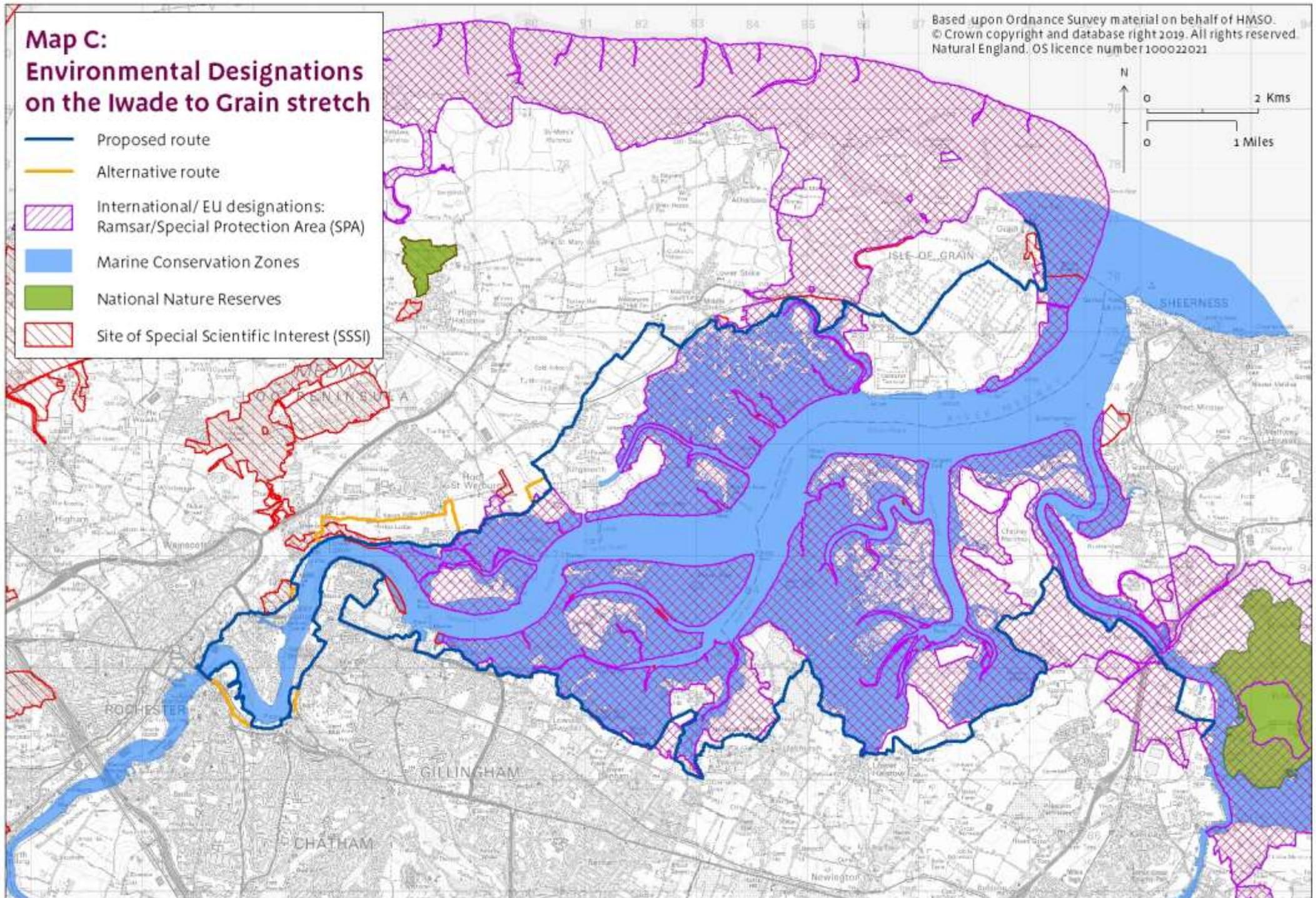
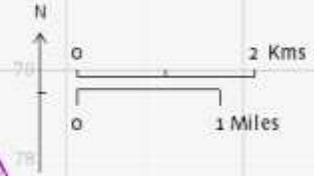
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Map C: Environmental Designations on the Iwade to Grain stretch

- Proposed route
- Alternative route
- International/ EU designations:
Ramsar/Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Marine Conservation Zones
- National Nature Reserves
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

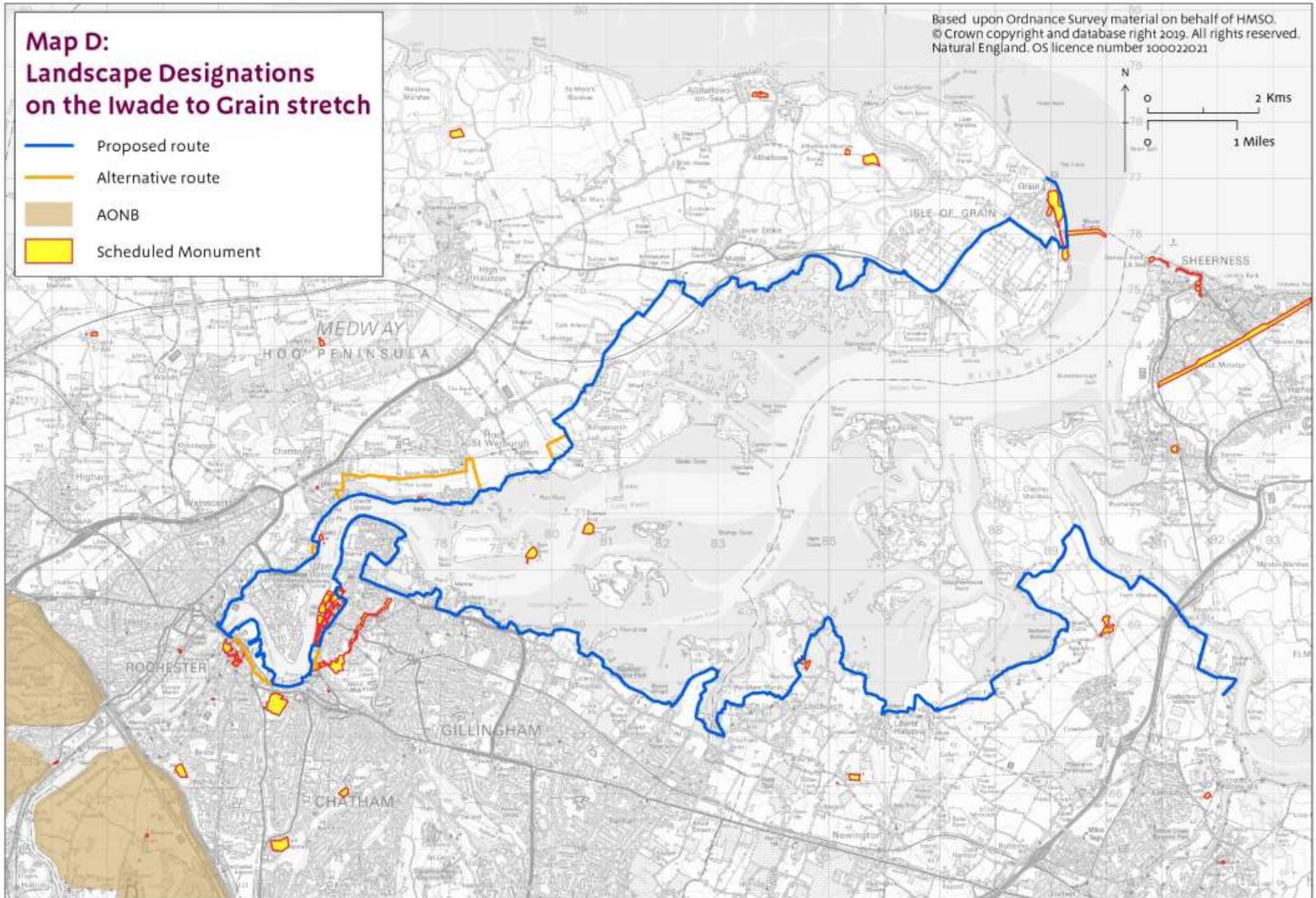
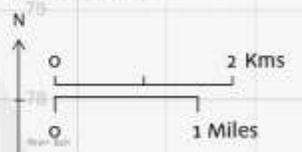
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Map D: Landscape Designations on the Iwade to Grain stretch

- Proposed route
- Alternative route
- AONB
- Scheduled Monument

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Other issues

7. Future changes

Below we explain the procedures for future changes to the coastal access provisions, once proposals have been approved by the Secretary of State. Where the need for future changes was foreseeable at the time of preparing the proposals we have indicated this in the relevant reports.

Roll-back

Reports IGR 2 to IGR 10 and IGR 12 include proposals for specified parts of the route to 'roll back' either:

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

Where sections of the approved route need to change for these reasons in order to remain viable, the new route will be determined by Natural England without any requirement for further reference to the Secretary of State. Coastal erosion can happen at any time and so, in some cases, this provision may need to be invoked between approval of the report and commencement of new access rights.

In particular, so far as we consider it necessary in order to maintain the viability of the route as a whole, we may determine that any part of the route is to be repositioned landward of any physical boundary feature, area of excepted land or area from which we consider it necessary to exclude access e.g. a protected site designated for its conservation value.

In determining the new route, we will take into account:

- the local factors present at that time, including any views expressed by people with a relevant interest in affected land;
- the terms of the Coastal Access duty (see Annex B: Glossary of terms), including the requirement to aim to strike a fair balance between the interests of the public and the interests of any person with a relevant interest in the land; and
- the criteria set out in part B of the Coastal Access Scheme.

Any changes to the route in accordance with these proposals will come into force on a date decided by us. On this date, coastal access rights will come into force as necessary along any new alignment. The date of change will follow any necessary physical establishment work, including any installation of signs to enable the public to identify the modified route on the ground. We will take reasonable steps to ensure that anyone with a relevant interest in land directly affected by the change is made aware this date.

In places where the trail rolls back in this way in response to coastal change, the landward extent of the coastal margin may also move inland automatically:

- with the trail itself, or
- because a landward area of section 15 land (see Annex B: Glossary of terms) or foreshore, cliff, dune, or beach, or a bank, barrier or flat, newly touches the trail when it rolls back, with the result that it automatically becomes part of the margin under the terms of the legislation.

Ordinarily, where roll-back has been proposed and becomes necessary, we would expect the trail to be adjusted to follow the current feature (for example, the cliff edge or top of foreshore). Where we foresee that local circumstances will require more detailed consideration, we have provided further information within the tables in Part 3 of the relevant report. This and the above information is intended as a guide only, based on information available to us at the time of writing, and on expert advice provided by the access authority,

Environment Agency and others. We have taken and will continue to take all reasonable steps to discuss implications and options with all parties likely to be affected by such changes, both during the initial planning work that preceded the writing of the reports for each length, and during any future work to plan and implement a 'rolled back' route.

Other changes

We will normally be required to submit a variation report seeking approval from the Secretary of State in order to make any other changes to the route of the trail (or to propose non-automatic changes to the landward boundary of the coastal margin) - for example if the land was subject to new build development. Such changes would be subject to the same procedures for consultation, representations and objections as our initial reports. Potential developments of which we are already aware that could potentially affect the route on the stretch are summarised below.

- There may be a redevelopment of the farm buildings north of Great Barksore Farm. If plans are developed and go ahead, this may affect the route of the trail in report IGR 4.
- To the west of Gillingham Pier (report IGR 8) there are plans for a mixed use waterfront development called Chatham Waters, part of which has already been built. In the coming phases over the next ten years, a new waterfront promenade will be delivered providing an opportunity to align the trail (Map IGR 8a) closer to the coast with new views of the sea.
- The site near Sun Pier (report IGR 8) has planning permission for a mixed use development. Our proposals have already incorporated the latest designs of the promenade walk, however further minor amendments may be required once more detailed landscaping plans become available.
- Medway Council is considering an option to develop a new rural town at Hoo St Werburgh (report IGR 9) to meet their housing need as part of their draft Local Plan. If this development (including a new Country Park) is approved, then we may look at new opportunities to improve the ECP in this area.
- Network Rail is planning on carrying out an upgrade of Grain Crossing within the next five years (report IGR 12). This may lead to minor amendments of the trail and landward coastal margin at this location.

However, even without a variation report:

- i We would be able to impose new or modify existing local restrictions or exclusions on coastal access rights as necessary, and people with a legal interest in the land would be able to apply to us for such directions under certain circumstances – see chapter 6 of the Coastal Access Scheme.
- ii Further work could be carried out where necessary either to establish or maintain the route, or to provide any means of access to the coastal margin, using powers and procedures set out in Schedule 20 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 and chapter 3 of Part 1 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
- iii. If at any time the use of affected land should change, the normal rules in relation to excepted land would apply, so for example land newly covered by buildings and their curtilage, and land in the course of development, would automatically become excepted from the coastal access rights – see Annex C: Excepted Land Categories.

8. Restrictions and exclusions

In certain circumstances we can restrict or exclude access to the trail and margin. The legal term for an exclusion or restriction is a direction.

Below, we summarise the directions to exclude or restrict the coastal access rights proposed by these reports.

Refer to Part 6.7 and Figure 19 of the approved Coastal Access Scheme for more information.

Report reference	Location/extent (see relevant map for more information)	Type of direction	Purpose of direction	Grounds and relevant section of CROW	Duration
IGR 1 – IGR 12	The saltmarsh and flat seaward of route sections IGR-1-S001 and IGR-12-S024. See Map E and the directions maps in reports IGR 1 to IGR 12.	Exclusion	Unsuitable for public access	Saltmarsh and flat S25A	All year
IGR 2	Chetney Marshes Coastal margin seaward of route sections IGR-2-S006 and IGR-2-S007. See Map E and the directions maps in report IGR 2.	Exclusion	Sensitive wildlife (breeding, passage & wintering birds)	Nature conservation S26(3)(a)	All year
IGR 4	Barksore Marshes. Coastal margin seaward of route sections IGR-4-S003 and IGR-4-S008. See Map E and the directions maps in report IGR 4.	Exclusion	Sensitive wildlife (breeding, passage & wintering birds)	Nature conservation S26(3)(a)	All year
IGR 4	Coastline near Great Barksore Farm Coastal margin seaward of route	Exclusion	Sensitive wildlife (feeding, passage & wintering birds)	Nature conservation S26(3)(a)	All year

Report reference	Location/extent (see relevant map for more information)	Type of direction	Purpose of direction	Grounds and relevant section of CROW	Duration
	sections IGR-4-S009 and IGR-4-S012. See Map E and the directions maps in report IGR 4.				
IGR 4	Lower Halstow Yacht Club Coastal margin adjacent to the route sections IGR-4-S013. See Map E and the directions maps in report IGR 4.	Exclusion	Land management / public safety	Land management S24 / public safety s25(1)(b)	All year
IGR 6	Ham Green Grazing Marsh, Horsham Marsh and Upchurch Seawall. Coastal margin seaward of route sections IGR-6-S001 and IGR-6-S022. See Map E and the directions maps in report IGR 6.	Exclusion	Sensitive wildlife (breeding, passage & wintering birds)	Nature conservation S26(3)(a)	All year
IGR 6	Wet grassland at Upchurch adjacent to Poot Lane and Horsham Fishing Lakes. Coastal margin seaward of route sections IGR-6-S007 and IGR-6-S014.	Exclusion	Sensitive wildlife (passage & wintering birds)	Nature conservation S26(3)(a)	1 st October to 31 st March each year

Report reference	Location/extent (see relevant map for more information)	Type of direction	Purpose of direction	Grounds and relevant section of CROW	Duration
	See Map E and the directions maps in report IGR 6.				
IGR 6	<p>Horsham Farm</p> <p>Route alignment IGR-6-S016 and coastal margin seaward of IGR-6-S015 and IGR-6-S016</p> <p>See Map E and the directions maps in report IGR 6.</p>	Exclusion	Land management	Land management S24	Up to 20 days per year
IGR 6	<p>Hay field south of Woodgers Wharf</p> <p>Coastal margin adjacent to route section IGR-6-S023.</p> <p>See Map E and the directions maps in report IGR 6.</p>	Keep dogs on leads	Land management	Land management S24	All year
IGR 6	<p>Beckenham Mobile Home Park</p> <p>Route alignment on section IGR-6-S024</p> <p>See Map E and the directions maps in report IGR 6.</p>	Keep dogs on leads	Land management	Land management S24	All year
IGR 7	<p>Motney Hill Sewage Treatment Works</p> <p>Coastal margin seaward of route sections IGR-7-S008 and IGR-7-S009.</p>	Exclusion	Land management / public safety	Land management S24 / public safety s25(1)(b)	All year

Report reference	Location/extent (see relevant map for more information)	Type of direction	Purpose of direction	Grounds and relevant section of CROW	Duration
	See Map E and the directions maps in report IGR 7.				
IGR 7	Fort Darnet Coastal margin at Fort Darnet, seaward of route sections IGR-7-S001 to IGR-7-S043. See Map E and the directions maps in report IGR 7.	Exclusion	Sensitive wildlife (breeding, passage & wintering birds)	Nature conservation S26(3)(a)	All year
IGR 8	St Mary's Island The trail and seaward coastal margin of route sections IGR-8-S022 to IGR-8-S043. See Map E and the directions maps in report IGR 8.	Keep dogs on leads	Land management	Land management S24	All year
IGR 8	St Mary's Island The trail and seaward coastal margin of route sections IGR-8-S022 to IGR-8-S025 and IGR-8-S034 to IGR-8-S042. See Map E and the directions maps in report IGR 8.	No Fishing	Land management	Land management S24	All year
IGR 8	Chatham Historic Dockyard	Exclusion	Land management	Land management	All year

Report reference	Location/extent (see relevant map for more information)	Type of direction	Purpose of direction	Grounds and relevant section of CROW	Duration
	Coastal margin seaward of route sections IGR-8-S049 to IGR-8-S067 See Map E and the directions maps in report IGR 8.			S24	
IGR 6	Medway Council Offices/Gun Wharf The trail and seaward coastal margin of route section IGR-8-S067 See Map E and the directions maps in report IGR 8.	Exclusion	Land management	Land management S24	7pm to 7am daily
IGR 8	Rochester Riverside The trail and seaward coastal margin of route sections IGR-8-S084 to IGR-8-S086. See Map E and the directions maps in report IGR 8.	Exclusion	Land management and public safety	Land management S24 and public safety S25(1)(b)	All year

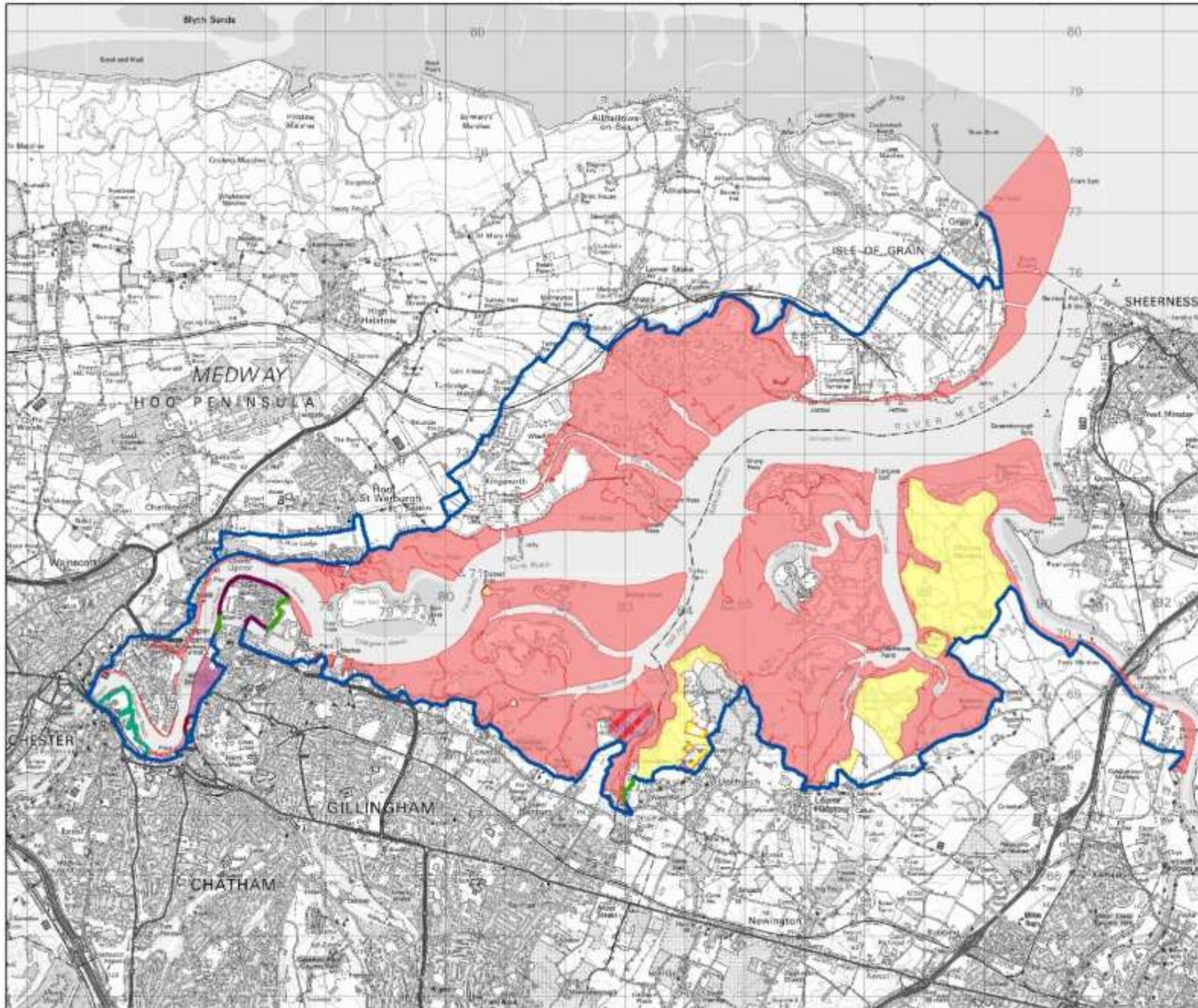
These directions will not prevent or affect:

- 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

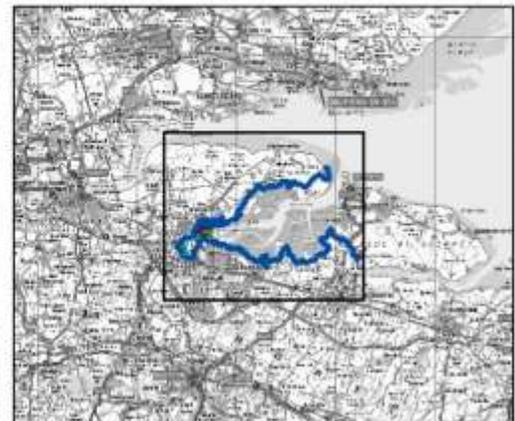
Any such use is not prohibited or limited by these arrangements.

Map E: Extent of Directions

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. Please refer to Reports IGR 1 to IGR 12 for more detailed directions maps



Map E: Extent of Directions



Annex A: Bibliography

Information about Natural England's coastal access programme:

Natural England

www.gov.uk/government/collections/england-coast-path-improving-public-access-to-the-coast

Information about the statutory framework for coastal access:

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

www.gov.uk/government/publications/marine-and-coastal-access-act-2009

Coastal Access Scheme

NE446 - Coastal Access: Natural England's Approved Scheme

Natural England

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5327964912746496>

Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/23/part/9/crossheading/the-coastal-access-duty

Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 [CROW]

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/contents

The Access to the Countryside (Coastal Margin) (England) Order 2010

www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/558/contents/made

National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6/12-13-14/97

The Coastal Access Reports (Consideration and Modification Procedure) (England) Regulations 2010

www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1976/contents/made

Environmental legislation referred to in the reports:

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1012/contents/made>

The Conservation of Habitats and Species and Planning (Various Amendments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2018

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/1307/contents/made>

Other published information used in the preparation of the report:

Countryside and Coastal Access Improvement Plan for Kent, April 2013

Kent County Council

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/environment-waste-and-planning-policies/countryside-policies-and-reports/countryside-and-coastal-access-improvement-plan>

Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Kent, 2007-2017

Medway Council

https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200160/roads_and_pavements/522/public_rights_of_way/7

Medway Emerging Local Plan (2018 to 2037)

Medway Council

https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200149/planning_policy/519/future_medway_local_plan

Swale Adopted Local Plan (Bearing Fruits 2031)

Swale Borough Council

<https://www.swale.gov.uk/local-plan-for-swale/>

Kent Ramblers – Kent Coastal Access

<http://www.kentramblers.org.uk/coastal/survey/Swale.pdf>

<http://www.kentramblers.org.uk/coastal/survey/Medway.pdf>

Medway Estuary and Swale Flood and Coastal Risk Management Strategy 2019

Environment Agency

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/medway-estuary-and-swale-flood-and-coastal-risk-management-strategy/medway-estuary-and-swale-flood-and-coastal-risk-management-strategy>

Thames Estuary 2100: How the Environment Agency is planning to manage tidal flood risk in the Thames estuary until the year 2100.

Environment Agency

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/thames-estuary-2100-te2100>

The New deal; Management of National Trails in England from April 2013 (NE426)

<http://Publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6238141>

Annex B: Glossary of terms

1949 Act means the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. The 1949 Act includes provisions and procedures for the creation of long-distance routes (now more commonly known as National Trails). These provisions were amended and added to by the 2009 Act for the purpose of identifying the coastal trail. See Bibliography for publication details.

2009 Act means the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. Part 9 of the 2009 Act includes provisions to improve public access to the coast. There are supplementary provisions relating to:

- consideration of coastal access reports, objections and representations by the Secretary of State – in Schedule 1A of the 1949 Act (inserted by Schedule 19 of the 2009 Act);
- the establishment and maintenance of the English coastal route – in Schedule 20 of the 2009 Act.

Section 1.2 of the Coastal Access Scheme includes a brief overview of the main provisions, which are explained in more detail in subsequent chapters. See Bibliography for publication details.

alignment is the term we use to describe the choices we make about the proposed route of the trail and the landward boundary of the coastal margin.

alternative route means a route proposed to the Secretary of State under section 55C of the 1949 Act, to operate as a diversion from the ordinary route at certain times. The associated term optional alternative route denotes a route which the public has the *option* to use at times when the ordinary route is unsuitable for use because of flooding, tidal action, coastal erosion or other geomorphological processes. Neither type of alternative route creates any seaward margin. Paragraphs 4.10.16 to 4.10.18 of the Scheme explain more about the potential use of optional alternative routes.

building has the same meaning given in Schedule 1 to CROW, as amended for the coast by the Order. The term includes any structure or erection and any part of a building. For this purpose “structure” includes any tent, caravan or other temporary or moveable structure. It does not include any fence or wall, anything which is a means of access (as defined by CROW section 34 – for example steps or bridges), or any slipway, hard or quay.

coastal access duty means Natural England’s duty under section 296 of the 2009 Act to secure improvements to public access to the English coast. It is explained in more detail in 1.2 of the Coastal Access Scheme.

coastal access rights is the term we use to describe the rights of public access to the coast provided under section 2(1) of CROW as a result of the provisions of the 2009 Act and the Order. Coastal access rights are normally rights of access on foot for open-air recreation. These rights are by default subject to national restrictions and may additionally be subject to directions which restrict or exclude them locally. Section 2.4 of the Coastal Access Scheme explains more about the nature and management of coastal access rights.

coastal margin or margin means a margin of land at the coast falling within one or more of the descriptions given at article 3 of the Order. Its main component is land subject to the coastal access rights, but it also contains other land, including some land that is not accessible to the public. A land owner may also voluntarily include land in the coastal access margin by making a dedication. Section 2.3 of the Scheme explains these other categories of land and how they fit in.

coastal processes is a term used in the reports to mean coastal erosion, encroachment by the sea or other physical change due to geomorphological processes such as landslip. Where any part of the trail could be significantly affected by coastal processes, either directly or because of the need to maintain continuity with a part that is directly affected, we have included recommendations for it to roll back in accordance with a description in the relevant report.

CROW means the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Coastal access rights take effect by virtue of CROW section 2(1). Certain provisions in CROW are amended or added to by the 2009 Act and the Order for the purposes of the coast. Chapter 2 of the Coastal Access Scheme provides an overview of how the amended CROW provisions apply to the coast. See Bibliography for publication details.

dedicate/dedication means any voluntary dedication of land by the owner or long leaseholder under section 16 of CROW so that it will be subject to access rights under that Act. A dedication may also make provision for specific national restrictions that would otherwise apply over the affected land to be removed or relaxed.

Land within the coastal margin that was previously dedicated as access land under CROW becomes subject to the coastal access regime, including the national restrictions and the reduced level of liability operating on other parts of the margin with coastal access rights. On certain land, a dedication may be used to 'opt in' to the coastal access regime land where it would not otherwise apply. Chapter 2 of the Coastal Access Scheme explains these scenarios in more detail.

definitive map means the legal record of public rights of way. It shows public footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways, and byways open to all traffic.

direction means a direction under chapter II of CROW Part 1 to impose local restrictions or exclusions on the use of the coastal access rights.

Estuarial waters are defined in section 309 of the 2009 Act as any waters within the limits of transitional waters within the meaning of Council Directive 2000/60/EC (the European Community Water Framework Directive). Transitional waters are defined in Schedule 1 to the Directive as "bodies of surface water in the vicinity of river mouths which are partially saline in character as a result of their proximity to coastal waters but which are substantially influenced by freshwater flows". The Environment Agency has mapped their seaward limit on each English estuary. Section 10.1 of the Scheme explains the relevance of estuarial waters to our proposals for coastal access at estuaries.

excepted land – see Annex C.

exclude/exclusion refer to local exclusion of the coastal access rights by direction (as opposed to the national restrictions that apply on all coastal access land by default). In this way the use of the rights may where necessary either be excluded completely, or restricted in specified ways by means of a local restriction. Section 6.6 of the Coastal Access Scheme explains the provisions in detail and our approach to their use.

foreshore is not defined in the 2009 Act or the Order. In the reports and this Overview it is taken to mean the land between mean low water and mean high water.

gate is used in several ways in the reports:

- 'Field gate' means a wide farm gate, for vehicle access.
- 'Kissing gate' means a pedestrian access gate, sometimes suitable for wheelchairs.
- 'Wicket gate' means a narrow field gate, sometimes suitable for wheelchairs, but unsuitable for larger vehicles.

guide fencing is a term the reports may use to describe simple temporary fencing which can be put up and taken down with minimal cost or effort – see figure 18 in chapter 6 of the Coastal Access Scheme.

Habitats Regulations Assessment means an assessment made in accordance with regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

the legislation is the term the reports use to describe four pieces of legislation which include provisions relevant to the implementation of our proposals: the 2009 Act, the 1949 Act, CROW and the Order. There are separate entries in the glossary which describe each of these in more detail.

a **length** is the term used to describe the part of the stretch covered by each individual report.

local access forum means a local access forum established under section 94 of CROW. Natural England is required to consult the relevant local access forum in the preparation of the reports, and to invite representations from it on its proposals – see chapter 3 of the Coastal Access Scheme for details.

margin (see coastal margin)

national restrictions – see Annex D.

National Trail means a long-distance route approved by the Secretary of State under section 52 of the 1949 Act.

objection means an objection by a person with a relevant interest in affected land (i.e. its owner or occupier) to Natural England about a proposal in a report. An objection must be made on certain specified grounds, in accordance with the provisions in Schedule 1A of the 1949 Act (as inserted by Schedule 19 of the 2009 Act). Stage 3 of the implementation process described in chapter 3 of the Coastal Access Scheme provides an overview of the procedures for considering objections.

ordinary route means the line normally followed by the trail.

the **Order** means the Access to the Countryside (Coastal Margin) (England) Order 2010 (S.I. 2010/558), made under section 3A of CROW. It sets out descriptions of land which are coastal margin and amends Part I of CROW in certain key respects for the purposes of coastal access. See Bibliography for publication details.

public right of way (PRoW) means a public footpath, bridleway, restricted byway or byway open to all traffic. These public rights of way are recorded on the definitive map.

relevant interest means a relevant interest in land, as defined by section 297(4) of the 2009 Act. This is a person who:

- holds an estate in fee simple absolute in possession in the land;
- holds a term of years absolute in the land, or
- is in lawful occupation of the land.

A relevant interest must therefore own or occupy the land in question, rather than simply having some other kind of legal interest over it.

representation means a representation made by any person to Natural England regarding proposals in any of its reports. A representation may be made on any grounds, in accordance with the provisions in Schedule 1A of the 1949 Act (as inserted by Schedule 19 of the 2009 Act). Stage 3 of the implementation process described in chapter 3 of the Coastal Access Scheme provides an overview of the procedures for considering representations.

restrict/restriction – see “exclude/exclusion”.

Roll-back is the term the Scheme uses to describe arrangements made under the provisions of section 55B of the 1949 Act, whereby we may propose to the Secretary of State in a coastal access report that the route of a specified part of the trail which is subject to significant erosion or other coastal processes, or which links to such a section of trail, should be capable of being repositioned later in accordance with the proposals in our relevant report, without further confirmation by the Secretary of State. Section 4.10 of the

Scheme explains in more detail how this works, and part 6(d) of this Overview explains this in the context of the stretch.

route section is the term used in the reports to describe short sections of the proposed route for the trail. Each route section is assigned a nationally unique serial number which we use to refer to it in the proposals and on the accompanying maps.

section 15 land means land with public access rights under:

- section 193 of the Law of Property Act 1925;
- a local or private Act;
- a management scheme made under Part I of the Commons Act 1899; or
- an access agreement or access order made under Part V of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949;

or land subject to, or potentially subject to, public access under section 19 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

Where Section 15 land forms part of the coastal margin (which it may do in any of the ways explained in section 4.8 of the Coastal Access Scheme), these rights apply instead of the coastal access rights. Figure 6 in Section 2.4 of the Coastal Access Scheme shows the relationship of Section 15 land to the coastal access regime in more detail.

spreading room is the term we use to describe any land, other than the trail itself, which forms part of the coastal margin and which has public rights of access.

In addition to land with coastal access rights it therefore includes areas of section 15 land. Spreading room may be either seaward or landward of the trail, according to the extent of the margin. Section 4.8 of the Scheme explains in more detail the ways in which land may become spreading room. Spreading room may be subject to directions that restrict or exclude the coastal access rights locally from time to time. However, the Scheme does not use the term to describe land which is subject to a direction which excludes access for the long-term. Land is not described as spreading room in the Scheme if it falls into one of the descriptions of excepted land, although it may become spreading room if it loses its excepted status as a result of a change of use, or if the owner dedicates it as coastal margin. Where highways such as roads or public rights of way cross spreading room, they remain subject to the existing highway rights rather than becoming subject to coastal access rights.

statutory duty means the work an organisation must do by order of an Act of Parliament.

stretch is the whole area covered by our compendium of statutory reports making coastal access proposals to the Secretary of State, each covering one length within the stretch.

temporary route means a diversionary route which operates while access to the trail is excluded by direction. Unlike an alternative route, a temporary route may be specified later by or under the direction without requiring confirmation by the Secretary of State, though land owner consent is needed in some circumstances. Figure 17 in chapter 6 of the Coastal Access Scheme explains the provisions for temporary routes in more detail.

the trail is the term we use to describe the strip of land people walk along when following the route identified for the purposes of the Coastal Access Duty. See part 1.3 of the Coastal Access Scheme. Following approval by the Secretary of State of our proposals, the trail along that stretch becomes part of the National Trail known as the England Coast Path. By default, it is the land within 2 metres on either side of the approved route line, but often it is wider or narrower than this. The trail forms part of the coastal margin.

variation report means a report to the Secretary of State under section 55(1) of the 1949 Act. Natural England may prepare a variation report recommending changes to coastal access proposals that have previously been approved. Figure 10 in chapter 3 of the Coastal Access Scheme explains in more detail the circumstances when a variation report is necessary.

A variation report may also be prepared by Natural England (in the context of our recommendations for the **trail** which we have a duty to secure under section 296 of the 2009 Act) to recommend that the route of another National Trail at the coast is modified.

Annex C: Excepted land categories

The effect of Schedule 1 to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 is that some categories of land are completely excluded from the coastal access rights, even if they fall within the coastal margin:

- land covered by buildings or the curtilage of such land;
- land used as a park or garden;
- land used for the getting of minerals by surface working including quarrying (except, under certain circumstances, the removal of sand or shingle from an area of foreshore or beach);
- land used for the purposes of a railway (including a light railway) or tramway;
- land covered by pens in use for the temporary detention of livestock;
- land used for the purposes of a racecourse or aerodrome;
- land which is being developed and which will become excepted land under certain other excepted land provisions;
- land covered by works used for the purposes of a statutory undertaking (other than flood defence works or sea defence works) or the curtilage of such land;
- land covered by works used for an electronic communications code network or the curtilage of any such land;
- land the use of which is regulated by byelaws under section 14 of the Military Lands Act 1892 or section 2 of the Military Lands Act 1900;
- land which is, or forms part of, a school playing field or is otherwise occupied by the school and used for the purposes of the school; and
- land which is, or forms part of, a highway (within the meaning of the Highways Act 1980) – see below.

Some other land categories are excepted by default, but we may propose that the trail should cross them on an access strip – in which case the strip itself is not excepted from the coastal access rights. Where land in any of these categories would form part of the coastal margin in proposals, it would therefore be fully excepted from coastal access rights. That includes:

- land on which the soil is being, or has at any time within the previous 12 months been, disturbed by any ploughing or drilling undertaken for the purposes of planting or sowing crops or trees;
- land used for the purposes of a golf course;
- land which is, or forms part of, a regulated caravan or camping site; and
- land which is, or forms part of, a burial ground.

Highways are also excepted from the coastal access rights. This does not prevent the trail from following a public footpath or other highway, and people can continue exercising their rights to use highways that fall within the wider spreading room. Such highways form part of the coastal margin even though the access rights along them are afforded by other legislation.

Land owners may choose, under the legislation, to dedicate excepted land as a permanent part of the coastal margin. These provisions are explained in more detail in Chapter 2 of our Coastal Access Scheme.

Annex D: National restrictions

The coastal access rights which would be newly introduced under our proposals include most types of open-air recreation on foot or by wheelchair including walking, climbing and picnicking.

The scope of these coastal access rights is normally limited by a set of rules that we call in the Coastal Access Scheme the “national restrictions”.

They list some specific activities not included within the coastal access rights – for example camping, horse riding and cycling. The national restrictions on the coastal access rights are set out on the pages that follow.

The national restrictions do not prevent such recreational uses taking place under other rights, or with the landowner’s permission, or by traditional tolerance – for example on an area of foreshore where horse riding is customary. In particular, these national restrictions have no effect on people’s use of public rights of way or Section 15 land (see the entry for ‘section 15 land’ in the Glossary).

The land owner (or in some circumstances a long leaseholder or farm tenant) also has the option to include such recreational uses within the coastal access rights on a particular area of land, or on his holdings generally. He can do this:

- permanently (i.e. on behalf of himself and future owners of the land), by dedicating such rights under section 16 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW); or
- until further notice, by agreeing that we should give a direction under CROW Schedule 2 paragraph 7 to this effect.

We can provide more information about these options on request.

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

SCHEDULE 2 RESTRICTIONS TO BE OBSERVED BY PERSONS EXERCISING RIGHT OF ACCESS (Section 2)

General restrictions

- 1 (1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), section 2(1) does not entitle a person to be on any land if, in or on that land, he –
- (a) drives or rides any vehicle other than an invalid carriage as defined by section 20(2) of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970,
 - (b) uses a vessel or sailboard on any non-tidal water,
 - (c) has with him any animal other than a dog,
 - (d) commits any criminal offence,
 - (e) lights or tends a fire or does any act which is likely to cause a fire,
 - (f) intentionally or recklessly takes, kills, injures or disturbs any animal, bird or fish,
 - (g) intentionally or recklessly takes, damages or destroys any eggs or nests,
 - (h) feeds any livestock,
 - (i) bathes in any non-tidal water,
 - (j) engages in any operations of or connected with hunting, shooting, fishing, trapping, snaring, taking or destroying of animals, birds or fish or has with him any engine, instrument or apparatus used for hunting, shooting, fishing, trapping, snaring, taking or destroying animals, birds or fish,
 - (k) uses or has with him any metal detector,
 - (l) intentionally removes, damages or destroys any plant, shrub, tree or root or any part of a plant, shrub, tree or root,
 - (m) obstructs the flow of any drain or watercourse, or opens, shuts or otherwise interferes with any sluice-gate or other apparatus,
 - (n) without reasonable excuse, interferes with any fence, barrier or other device designed to prevent accidents to people or to enclose livestock,
 - (o) neglects to shut any gate or to fasten it where any means of doing so is provided, except where it is reasonable to assume that a gate is intended to be left open,
 - (p) affixes or writes any advertisement, bill, placard or notice,
 - (q) in relation to any lawful activity which persons are engaging in or are about to engage in on that or adjoining land, does anything which is intended by him to have the effect –
 - (i) of intimidating those persons so as to deter them or any of them from engaging in that activity,
 - (ii) of obstructing that activity, or
 - (iii) of disrupting that activity,
 - (r) without reasonable excuse, does anything which (whether or not intended by him to have the effect mentioned in paragraph (q)) disturbs, annoys or obstructs any persons engaged in a lawful activity on the land,
 - (s) engages in any organised games, or in camping, hang-gliding or para-gliding, or
 - (t) engages in any activity which is organised or undertaken (whether by him or another) for any commercial purpose.
- (2) Nothing in sub-paragraph (1)(f) or (j) affects a person's entitlement by virtue of section 2(1) to be on any land which is coastal margin if the person's conduct (to the extent that it falls within sub-paragraph (1)(f) or (j)) is limited to permitted fishing-related conduct.
- (3) In sub-paragraph (2) the reference to permitted fishing-related conduct is a reference to the person –
- (a) having a fishing rod or line, or

(b) engaging in any activities which –

(i) are connected with, or ancillary to, fishing with a rod and line, or with a line only, in the exercise of a right to fish, and

(ii) take place on land other than land used for grazing or other agricultural purposes.

2 (1) In paragraph 1(k), “metal detector” means any device designed or adapted for detecting or locating any metal or mineral in the ground.

(2) For the purposes of paragraph 1(q) and (r), activity on any occasion on the part of a person or persons on land is “lawful” if he or they may engage in the activity on the land on that occasion without committing an offence or trespassing on the land.

3 Regulations may amend paragraphs 1 and 2.

4 (1) During the period beginning with 1st March and ending with 31st July in each year, section 2(1) does not entitle a person to be on any land if he takes, or allows to enter or remain, any dog which is not on a short lead.

(2) Sub-paragraph (1) does not apply in relation to land which is coastal margin.

5 Whatever the time of year, section 2(1) does not entitle a person to be on any land if he takes, or allows to enter or remain, any dog which is not on a short lead and which is in the vicinity of livestock.

6 In paragraphs 4 and 5, “short lead” means a lead of fixed length and of not more than two metres.

6A (1) Whatever the time of year, section 2(1) does not entitle a person to be on any land which is coastal margin at any time if –

(a) that person has taken onto the land, or allowed to enter or remain on the land, any dog, and

(b) at that time, the dog is not under the effective control of that person or another person.

(2) For this purpose a dog is under the effective control of a person if the following conditions are met.

(3) The first condition is that –

(a) the dog is on a lead, or

(b) the dog is within sight of the person and the person remains aware of the dog's actions and has reason to be confident that the dog will return to the person reliably and promptly on the person's command.

(4) The second condition is that the dog remains –

(a) on access land, or

(b) on other land to which that person has a right of access.

(5) For the purposes of sub-paragraph (4), a dog which is in tidal waters is to be regarded as remaining on access land.

6B (1) Section 2(1) does not entitle a person to be on any land which is coastal margin if, on that land, the person obstructs any person passing, or attempting to pass, on foot along any part of the English coastal route, any official alternative route or any relevant temporary route.

(2) In this paragraph –

“the English coastal route” means the route secured pursuant to the coastal access duty (within the meaning of section 296 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009);

“official alternative route” has the meaning given by section 55J of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949;

“relevant temporary route” means a route for the time being having effect by virtue of a direction under section 55I of that Act to the extent that the line of the route passes over coastal margin.

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