



# England Coast Path Stretch: Isle of Sheppey

## Report IOS 3: Oak Lane, Minster to Hen's Brook, Eastchurch Gap

### Part 3.1: Introduction

<b>Start Point:</b>	<b>Oak Lane, Minster (Grid reference 596508 173066)</b>
<b>End Point:</b>	<b>Hen's Brook, Eastchurch Gap (Grid reference 599411 172629)</b>
<b>Relevant Maps:</b>	<b>IOS 3a to IOS 3b</b>

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

3.1.2 This report covers length IOS 3 of the stretch, which is the coast between Oak Lane, Minster and Hen's Brook, Eastchurch Gap. It makes free-standing statutory proposals for this part of the stretch, and seeks approval for them by the Secretary of State in their own right under section 52 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

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

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

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

## Part 3.2: Proposals Narrative

### The trail:

3.2.1 Follows public highways, rights of way and existing walked routes along part of this length.

3.2.2 Includes 11 sections of new path between Plough Road, Minster and Hen's Brook, Eastchurch Gap. See maps IOS 3a and IOS 3b and associated tables below for details.

3.2.3 Follows the cliff top closely for part of this length (see map IOS 3b) with good views of the sea.

3.2.4 Between Paddy's Point and Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park, a significant inland diversion is necessary to take the trail past built up areas and complex land management and development issues. Good, elevated views of the coast are available from parts of this inland route. See maps IOS 3a and 3b.

### Protection of the environment:

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

3.2.5 The following designated sites affect this length of coast (see Overview map C1):

- Outer Thames Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Sheppey Cliffs and Foreshore Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

3.2.6 We consider that the coastal environment, including features of the sites listed above, along this length of coast, is unlikely to be sensitive to the improvements to coastal access envisaged and that no special measures are needed in respect of our proposals.

3.2.7 Natural England is satisfied that the proposals for coastal access in this report are made in accordance with relevant environmental protection legislation. For more information about how we came to this conclusion in respect of the natural environment; see the following assessments of the access proposals that we have published separately:

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

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

### Accessibility:

3.2.8 There are few artificial barriers to accessibility along the proposed route, however a number of new gates are necessary as the route passes through fields with livestock. We will seek to install gates which facilitate access for people with reduced mobility. The natural coastal terrain can also be challenging for some people with reduced mobility and this is the case on sections of our proposed route because:

- The trail would follow an uneven grass or bare soil path in places;
- The trail will follow uneven surfaces along tracks.

3.2.9 On the public footpath north of Chequers Hill (map IOS 3a), the existing stile will be replaced with a kissing gate to make it easier to use. We envisage this happening as part of the physical establishment works described below.

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

### Where we have proposed exercising statutory discretions:

**3.2.10 Landward boundary of the coastal margin:** We have used our discretion on some sections of the route to map the landward extent of the coastal margin to an adjacent physical boundary such as a fence line, pavement or track to make the extent of the new access rights clearer. See Table 3.3.1 below.

3.2.11 The Proposals Tables show where we are proposing to alter the default landward boundary of the coastal margin. These proposals are set out in columns 5b and 5c of table 3.3.1. Where these columns are left blank, we are making no such proposals, so the default landward boundary applies. See the note relating to Columns 5b & 5c (above Table 3.3.1) explaining what this means in practice.

**See also part 3 of the Overview - 'Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps', for a more detailed explanation of the default extent of the coastal margin and how we may use our discretion to adjust the margin, either to add land or to provide clarity.**

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

*Restriction of access along North Sheppey coast (near Cripps Farm, Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park and Connetts Farm)*

3.2.13 Dogs are to be kept to leads all year round on the alignment of the trail (route sections IOS-3-S012 to IOS-3-S014 and IOS-3-S016 to IOS-3-S021) that passes through inland fields close to Cripps Farm (map IOS 3a), and between Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park and Hen's Brook (map IOS 3b), under Section 24 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) for land management purposes. This restriction will have no legal effect on land where coastal access rights do not apply. See Direction Map 3A.

3.2.14 Along the north coast of Sheppey, the trail passes through multiple small fields and landholdings that lie between residential areas and a number of popular caravan parks. These fields have a variety of uses, including hay production, grazing and some arable, with management in any one field often varying from year to year. Landowners have raised concerns regarding contamination of hay and arable crops, given the proximity of significant residential populations and the likelihood of local dog walkers regularly using these fields. Dogs are already required to be kept on a lead at all times in the vicinity of stock, however given the small size of the fields here and the unique mix of different land management systems that walkers will encounter as they pass from one field to the next, we considered it necessary to establish a single approach to access management throughout these areas to allow the continuation of the current land management and provide walkers with a clear and consistent message about dog control. There are alternative areas available for letting dogs off lead near to Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park, including Kingsborough Community Woodland, south of Plough Road.

3.2.15 These directions will not prevent or affect:

- any existing local use of the land by right, as 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.

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

3.2.16 **Other factors affecting access:** On route sections IOS-3-S003 to IOS-3-S005 (see map IOS 3a), public access may be interrupted from time to time for short periods to allow the movement of caravans. This arrangement would continue without any local restriction on the new access rights to give effect to it formally.

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

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

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

3.2.18 Column 4 of table 3.3.1 indicates where roll-back has been proposed in relation to a route section. Where this is the case, the route, as initially determined at the time the report was prepared, is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps IOS 3a to IOS 3b as the proposed route of the trail.

3.2.19 If at any time in the future any part of a route section upon which roll-back has been specified needs, in Natural England's view, to change in order for the overall route to remain viable, the new route for the part in question will be determined by Natural England without further reference to the Secretary of State. This will be done in accordance with the criteria and procedures described under the title 'Roll-back' in part 7 of the Overview and section 4.10 of the Coastal Access Scheme. If this happens, the new route will become the approved route for that section for the purposes of the Order which determines where coastal access rights apply.

### Other future change:

3.2.20 A recent residential development on Plough Road, east of Marrowbone Hill (map IOS 3a), resulted in the narrowing of the existing verge. This development is now being considered retrospectively by Swale Borough Council. Before this development came about, our preferred option for alignment was to utilise this verge, rather than the proposals made for sections IOS-3-S011 to IOS-3-S014 (see the tables at 3.3.2 other options considered). If Swale Borough Council's decision on the current retrospective planning application allows for the provision of an adequate verge here, we would prepare a separate variation report to the Secretary of State to provide a safe route following Plough Road and Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park's entrance road.

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

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

### Establishment of the trail:

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

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

3.2.23 Our estimate of the capital costs for physical establishment of the trail on the proposed route is £11,431 and is informed by:

- Information already held by access authority, Kent County Council, in relation to the management of public rights of way;
- the conclusions of our deliberations in relation to potential impacts on the environment; and
- information gathered while visiting affected land and talking to the people who own and manage it about the options for the route.

3.2.24 There are four main elements to the overall cost:

- A significant number of new signs would be needed on the trail.
- New gates and gaps are required.
- Three sleeper bridges are required.
- A number of road safety measures including traffic signs and painted road markings on Oak Lane and Plough Road are required.

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

**Table 1: Estimate of capital costs**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Signs	£2,640
Gates	£4,300
Bridges	£900
Road safety measures	£2,100
Project management	£1,491
<b>Total</b>	<b>£11,431 (Exclusive of any VAT payable)</b>

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

### **Maintenance of the trail:**

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

3.2.27 We estimate that the annual cost to maintain the trail will be £2,104.45 formula used to calculate Natural England's contribution to the maintenance of other National Trails.

## Part 3.3: Proposals Tables

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

### 3.3.1 Section Details: Maps IOS 3a to IOS 3b - Oak Lane, Minster to Hen’s Brook, Eastchurch Gap.

Key notes on table:

1. Column 2 – an asterisk (\*) against the route section number means see also tables at 3.3.2: Other options considered.
2. Column 4 – ‘No’ means no roll-back is proposed for this route section. ‘Yes – normal’ means roll-back is proposed and is likely to follow the current feature (e.g. cliff edge/beach) for the foreseeable future as any coastal change occurs. Column 4 – ‘Yes – see table 3.3.5’ means roll-back is proposed, but refer to that table below about our likely approach to implementing it for this route section. This is because a more complex situation exists in this case and consideration must be given to how roll-back may happen in relation to excepted land, a protected site etc.
3. Column 5a - Certain coastal land types are included automatically in the coastal margin where they fall landward of the trail if they touch it at some point. The relevant land type (foreshore, cliff, bank, barrier, dune, beach, flat or section 15 land – see Glossary) is shown in this column where appropriate. “No” means none present on this route section.
4. Columns 5b and 5c – Any entry in these columns means we are proposing to align the landward boundary of the coastal margin on this route section with the physical feature(s) shown in 5b, for the reason in 5c. No text here means that for this route section the landward edge of the margin would be that of the trail itself - or if any default coastal land type is shown in 5a, that would be its landward boundary instead.

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Current status of route section(s)	Roll-back proposed? (See Part 7 of Overview)	Landward margin contains coastal land type?	Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary proposal	Explanatory notes
IOS 3a	IOS-3-S001	Public highway	Yes – see table 3.3.5	No	Landward edge of road	Clarity and cohesion	
IOS 3a	IOS-3-S002	Other existing walked route	Yes – see table 3.3.5	No	Landward edge of track	Clarity and cohesion	
IOS 3a	IOS-3-S003*	Public footpath	Yes – see table 3.3.5	No	Landward edge of track	Clarity and cohesion	
IOS 3a	IOS-3-S004*	Other existing	Yes – see table 3.3.5	No	Edge of path	Clarity and cohesion	

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Current status of route section(s)	Roll-back proposed? (See Part 7 of Overview)	Landward margin contains coastal land type?	Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary proposal	Explanatory notes
		walked route					
IOS 3a	IOS-3-S005*	Public footpath	Yes- see table 3.3.5	No	Edge of path	Clarity and cohesion	
IOS 3a	IOS -3-S006*	Public footpath	Yes – see table 3.3.5	No	Landward edge of track	Clarity and cohesion	
IOS 3a	IOS-3-S007*	Public highway	Yes – see table 3.3.5	No			
IOS 3a	IOS-3-S008*	Public footway (pavement)	Yes – see table 3.3.5	No	Landward edge of pavement	Clarity and cohesion	
IOS 3a	IOS-3-S009*	Public highway	Yes – see table 3.3.5	No			
IOS 3a	IOS-3-S010*	Not an existing walked route	Yes – see table 3.3.5	No	Road	Clarity and cohesion	
IOS 3a	IOS-3-S011*	Not an existing walked route	Yes – see table 3.3.5	No	Landward edge of track	Clarity and cohesion	
IOS 3a	IOS-3-S012*	Not an existing walked route	Yes – see table 3.3.5	No			
IOS 3a	IOS-3-S013*	Not an existing	Yes – see table 3.3.5	No			

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
		walked route					
IOS 3a	IOS-3-S014*	Not an existing walked route	Yes – see table 3.3.5	No			
IOS 3b	IOS-3-S015*	Other existing walked route	Yes – see table 3.3.5	No	Landward edge of track	Clarity and cohesion	
IOS 3b	IOS-3-S016*	Not an existing walked route	Yes – see table 3.3.5	No			
IOS 3b	IOS-3-S017*	Not an existing walked route	Yes – see table 3.3.5	No			
IOS 3b	IOS-3-S018*	Not an existing walked route	Yes – see table 3.3.5	No			
IOS 3b	IOS-3-S019*	Not an existing walked route	Yes – see table 3.3.5	No			
IOS 3b	IOS-3-S020*	Not an existing walked route	Yes – see table 3.3.5	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	
IOS 3b	IOS-3-S021*	Not an existing	Yes – see table 3.3.5	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Current status of route section(s)	Roll-back proposed? (See Part 7 of Overview)	Landward margin contains coastal land type?	Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary proposal	Explanatory notes
		walked route					

### 3.3.2 Other options considered: Maps IOS 3a to IOS 3b - Oak Lane, Minster to Hen’s Brook, Eastchurch Gap

3.3.3 For this length of coast our route investigations mainly centred on the viability of a coastal alignment through three distinct but contiguous areas (west to east): Oak Lane / East End Farm; Bell Farm Lane, and two adjacent caravan parks (Lazy Days Caravan Park and Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park), maps IOS 3a and IOS 3b. Each of these areas and the businesses therein presented a variety of land management issues regarding trail alignment. Taken separately and collectively, they led us to conclude that an inland alignment for the trail is required for this part of the coast in order to strike the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme.

For each area we investigated multiple options. We set these out in the tables below and in Map IOS 3: Other options considered - Oak Lane, Minster to Hen’s Brook, Eastchurch Gap.

Maps	Route section numbers	Other options considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
IOS 3a IOS 3: Other Options	IOS-3-S003 to IOS-3-S006	<p><b>1. The area of Oak Lane / East End Farm to Bell Farm Lane</b>, as part of a coastal alignment east from Oak Lane, via Bell Farm Lane, to the cliff top east of Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park</p> <p><b>Option 1:</b> We considered aligning the trail east along the cliff top public footpath, from Oak Lane near East End Farm, to join Bell Farm Lane, near Bell Farm. This route has only intermittent sea views. Access along the eastern section of this footpath is currently obstructed in places due to scrub encroachment.</p> <p><b>Option 1a:</b> Instead of using the eastern end of the public footpath, we also considered using a residential road, where</p>	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ it is the most direct route between East End Farm and Chequers Hill, to connect with the proposed route of the trail on Plough Road</li> <li>■ it provides elevated views of the Thames Estuary from higher ground near Chequers Hill</li> <li>■ it offers a quiet, off-road route along an existing walked path separated in part, from the adjacent land</li> <li>■ it avoids Bell Farm Lane and a residential road which are narrow in parts, with residential and farm traffic</li> <li>■ we concluded that overall the proposed route struck the best balance in terms of</li> </ul>

Maps	Route section numbers	Other options considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
		it runs seaward of the blocked footpath.	the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme
IOS 3a and IOS 3b  IOS 3: Other Options	Connecting Bell Farm Lane to IOS-3-S018	<p><b>2. The area of Bell Farm Lane, Lazy Days Caravan Park and Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park,</b> as part of a coastal alignment from Oak Lane, via Bell Farm Lane, to the cliff top east of Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park.</p> <p>We considered a relatively direct alignment for the route between Bell Farm Lane, in the west, and the proposed cliff top route in the east, through Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park. These investigations included a number of access points off Bell Farm Lane:</p> <p><b>Option 2:</b> We considered aligning the trail east from Bell Farm Lane, near Bell Farm, close to the cliff top, using the internal roads of two adjacent caravan parks (Lazy Days Caravan Park and Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park). This would join the proposed cliff top route at the north-eastern boundary of Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park. This route has only intermittent sea views.</p>	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ it avoids impacting on the commercial viability of Lazy Days Caravan Park, which currently operates a restricted access policy (no children)</li> <li>■ it avoids impacting on an operational maintenance area, part of Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park, found at the western end of this potential alignment</li> <li>■ it avoids impacting on privacy of residents within Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park, particularly if a new access point, close to caravans, is created at the eastern boundary of the holiday park</li> <li>■ although inland from the coast, it offers more opportunity, particularly near Chequers Hill, for far-reaching views over the Thames Estuary, than more coastal options.</li> <li>■ we concluded that overall the proposed route struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme</li> </ul>
IOS 3a  IOS 3: Other Options	Access point off Bell Farm Lane	<p><b>Option 2a:</b> We considered aligning the trail along Bell Farm's farmyard track before heading north, through a new access point into the western end of Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park.</p> <p>This option avoids passing through Lazy Days Caravan Park.</p>	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ it provides a safe route which avoids the farmyard track, busy with farm vehicles and operational farm activities</li> <li>■ it avoids impacting on privacy of residents within Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park, particularly if new access points, close to caravans, are created on the western and eastern boundaries of the holiday park</li> <li>■ we concluded that overall the proposed route struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme.</li> </ul>

Maps	Route section numbers	Other options considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
IOS 3a IOS 3: Other options considered	Access point off Bell Farm Lane	<p><b>Option 2b:</b> We also considered aligning the trail through a small field south of Bell Farm, grazed by heavy horses, before heading north, through a new access point into the western end of Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park.</p> <p>In order to provide a safe route through the field, a new fenced corridor would be required to separate the heavy horses from the public.</p> <p>This option avoids passing through Lazy Days Caravan Park and along the farm yard track, mentioned above.</p>	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ it avoids public safety issues associated with entering a relatively small field, with heavy horses, unaccustomed to public access</li> <li>■ it avoids reducing the size of grazing land here, through the creation of a separate fenced walking route</li> <li>■ it avoids impacting on privacy of residents within Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park, particularly if new access points, close to caravans, are created on the western and eastern boundaries of the holiday park</li> <li>■ we concluded that overall the proposed route struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme.</li> </ul>
IOS 3a IOS 3: Other Options	Access point off Bell Farm Lane	<p><b>Options 2c:</b> Further south, we considered aligning the trail off Bell Farm Lane, heading east through either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Pear Tree Farm Caravan Park, or</li> <li>■ Golden Leas Holiday Park,</li> </ul> <p>before turning north along an existing farm track towards a new access point into the western end of Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park.</p>	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ it avoids passing close to caravans and impacting on the privacy of residents within both the small Pear Tree Caravan Park and the larger Golden Leas Holiday Park</li> <li>■ it avoids passing through Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park, with the associated privacy issues described above</li> <li>■ we concluded that overall the proposed route struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme.</li> </ul>
IOS 3a and IOS 3b IOS 3: Other Options	Connecting Bell Farm Lane to Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park's access road	<p><b>3. The area of Bell Farm Lane and Bell Farm, south of Lazy Days Caravan Park and Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park,</b> as part of a coastal alignment from Oak Lane, via Bell Farm Lane, to the cliff top east of Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park.</p> <p><b>Option 3:</b> We considered aligning the trail between Bell Farm Lane and the Ashcroft</p>	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Option 3 is dependent on creating new access off Bell Farm Lane (Options 2 - 2c) which we have discounted for the reasons set out above</li> <li>■ it also avoids public safety issues associated with entering fields with heavy horses, unaccustomed to public access, and the need to create a separate fenced</li> </ul>

Maps	Route section numbers	Other options considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
		<p>Coast Holiday Park access road – on a more inland route, to avoid passing through the holiday parks.</p> <p>The route would pass, from west to east: adjacent to heavy horse paddocks, over a brook; and through fields grazed by heavy horses, before joining the proposed route on the Ashcroft Holiday Park access road.</p> <p>This option would involve passing through small and large fields with heavy horses, and would require the construction of a new pedestrian bridge across Boarer’s Run and tree removal.</p> <p>East of Boarer’s Run, there are some long-reaching views of the Thames Estuary.</p>	<p>walking route which would reduce available grazing land</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ it offers better value for money as it avoids the need for a bridge and associated earthworks plus considerable clearance of vegetation</li> <li>■ we concluded that overall the proposed route struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme.</li> </ul>
<p>IOS 3a and IOS 3b</p> <p>IOS 3: Other Options</p>	<p>Connecting Bell Farm Lane to Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park’s access road</p>	<p>We also considered a variation to Option 3 (above), east of Boarer’s Run, in order to avoid the safety concerns associated with heavy horses: aligning through the fields lying directly adjacent to Option 3 (to the south), which are used for sheep grazing and lambing.</p>	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Option 3 is dependent on creating new access off Bell Farm Lane (Options 2 -2c) which we have discounted for the reasons set out above</li> <li>■ it avoids relatively small sheep grazed fields that are used for lambing</li> <li>■ we concluded that overall the proposed route struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme.</li> </ul>

3.3.4 Having concluded that an inland alignment for the trail is required for this part of coast, in order to strike the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme, we focused our investigations on the extent to which Plough Road (including Marrowbone Hill) would form a viable route.

Again, this presented challenges and a number of further options were investigated, set out in the table below and shown on Map IOS 3: Other options considered - Oak Lane, Minster to Hen’s Brook, Eastchurch Gap.

Maps	Route section numbers	Other options considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
IOS 3a and IOS 3b  IOS 3: Other Options	IOS-3-S011 to IOS-3-S014	<p><b>The area of Plough Road (including Marrowbone Hill)</b></p> <p><b>Option 4: This route was initially our preferred option.</b></p> <p>We favoured aligning the trail eastwards, alongside Marrowbone Hill (north of the roadside hedgerow), before continuing east along the verge of Plough Road and turning north onto the Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park access track.</p>	<p>This preferred option became unavailable recently. A new residential development, just east of Marrowbone Hill, removed the potential to follow the north verge of Plough Road. A boundary wall was erected here and this development is now subject to a retrospective planning application, which at the time of this report's preparation, has yet to be determined. The safety of a route along this narrow part of Plough Road was dependant on the continuous availability of an off-road verge / refuges, as advised by Kent Highways. Without a sufficiently wide verge, this option was not considered safe for a promoted trail, and a more seaward option has been proposed. Please also see 'Other future change' in this report.</p> <p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ it utilises an existing track towards Punnetts Farm, before following the seaward edge of grassed fields to minimise impact on land management (mainly hay production) and privacy</li> <li>■ it avoids other small fields closer to the coast that that are used for heavy horses, sheep grazing and lambing</li> <li>■ we concluded that overall the proposed route struck the best balance of the options considered in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme.</li> </ul>
IOS 3a  IOS 3: Other Options	IOS-3-S011 to IOS-3-S014	<p><b>Option 5:</b> We considered crossing the road at the western end of Marrowbone Hill, before aligning along the south verge of the hill and Plough Road, towards the Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park access track.</p> <p>This option involves two crossings over Plough Road. Kent Highways has raised road</p>	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ it avoids multiple road crossings, as advised by Kent Highways - especially in the vicinity of Marrowbone Hill</li> <li>■ it provides a safe, off-road route</li> <li>■ it provides better value for money and avoids impacting on the landscape character of this area</li> </ul>

Maps	Route section numbers	Other options considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
		<p>safety concerns in this area, relating to poor pedestrian visibility and fast traffic.</p> <p>Significant and costly tree removal and path construction works would also be necessary to provide a safe and level route along this steep and high verge.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ it avoids potential impacts on wildlife associated with any tree and shrub clearance</li> <li>■ we concluded that overall the proposed route struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme.</li> </ul>
IOS 3a and IOS 3b  IOS 3: Other Options	IOS-3-S009 to IOS-3-S014	<p><b>Option 6:</b> We considered a more inland route to avoid the road safety issues at Marrowbone Hill, described above.</p> <p>This follows an existing by-way, south from Plough Road, before heading east through a new housing estate, and north through a woodland before re-crossing Plough Road, onto the access track to Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park.</p>	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ it provides a shorter, more direct route to the coast and reduces the likelihood of walkers following the road carriageway along Marrowbone Hill, which is unsafe for pedestrians</li> <li>■ it is closer to the coast and creates less coastal margin, affecting fewer properties</li> <li>■ it avoids the creation of multiple road crossings, as advised by Kent Highways</li> <li>■ we concluded that overall the proposed route struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme</li> </ul>
IOS 3a  IOS 3: Other Options	IOS-3-S004	<p>We also considered a number of variations to the proposed inland route. These included:</p> <p><b>Option 7:</b> we considered using the public right of way near Willow Farm. This runs adjacent to our proposed route, however the path, as recorded, has not been available for a number of years because it is obstructed by development.</p>	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ it follows the walked line. This has developed parallel to the line of the public footpath, in order for walkers to continue along the local rights of way network</li> <li>■ we concluded that overall the proposed route struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme.</li> </ul>
IOS 3a  IOS 3: Other options	Connecting Bell Farm Lane to Plough Road	<p><b>Option 7a:</b> We considered aligning the trail south-east from Bell Farm Lane on an existing public footpath, through Golden Leas Holiday Park, to</p>	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Option 7a is dependent on creating new access along Bell Farm Lane (Option 1)</li> </ul>

Maps	Route section numbers	Other options considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
		connect Bell Farm Lane with the proposed route along Plough Road.	<p>which we have discounted for the reasons set out above</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ it provides good, elevated views of the Thames Estuary, north of Chequers Hill, which are missing from this public footpath</li> <li>■ it provides a more pleasant and open walking route than the narrow, high-fenced footpath corridor south from Golden Leas Holiday Park</li> <li>■ we concluded that overall the proposed route struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme.</li> </ul>
IOS 3b IOS 3: Other Options	IOS-3-S016 to IOS-3-S017	<b>Option 7b:</b> we considered aligning the trail through the main entrance of Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park to follow internal roads and join the proposed cliff top route at the north-east corner of the holiday park.	<p>We opted the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ it avoids impacting on privacy of residents within Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park, particularly if a new access point, close to caravans, is created on the eastern boundary of the holiday park.</li> <li>■ it mainly follows the edge of the farmed fields used for arable, hay and sheep / lamb farming, minimising impacts on land management operations</li> <li>■ we concluded that overall the proposed route struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme.</li> </ul>

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

### 3.3.5 Roll-back implementation – more complex situations: Maps 3a and 3b Oak Lane, Minster to Hen’s Brook, Eastchurch Gap

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Feature(s) or site(s) potentially affected	Our likely approach to roll-back
IOS 3a	IOS-3-S001 to IOS-3-S004	Hollybush caravan park	If it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of the holiday park in this area, we will choose a new route after detailed discussions with all relevant interests, either (a) to pass through the sites or (b) if this is not practicable, to pass somewhere on the landward side of them. In reaching this judgement we will have full regard to the need to seek a fair balance

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Feature(s) or site(s) potentially affected	Our likely approach to roll-back
			between the interests of potentially affected owners and occupiers and those of the public.
IOS 3a and IOS 3b	IOS-3-S001 to IOS-3-S021	Buildings, homes	If it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of the specified excepted land (e.g. buildings, curtilage, gardens etc), we will choose a route landward of it, following discussions with owners and occupiers
IOS 3b	IOS-3-S018 and IOS-3-S019	Designated site: Sheppey Cliffs and Foreshore Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	If it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of a designated site (e.g. SSSI) whose designated features are sensitive to public access, or where the existing route already passing through such a site must be altered, we will choose a new route after detailed discussions with the relevant experts and with any potentially affected owners or occupiers, which will either (a) continue to pass through the site, if appropriate or (b) if necessary, be routed landward of it.

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

## Part 3.4: Proposals Maps

### 3.4.1 Map Index

Map reference	Map title
IOS 3a	Oak Lane, Minster to Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park
IOS 3b	Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park to Hen's Brook
IOS 3	Other options considered - Oak Lane, Minster to Hen's Brook, Eastchurch Gap
Directions Map IOS 3A	Directions for Report IOS 3: Oak Lane, Minster to Hen's Brook, Eastchurch Gap

## PROPOSALS

### Trail Sections

- Trail using existing public right of way or highway
- Trail using other existing walked route
- Trail not using existing walked route
- Alternative route
- Trail shown on other maps

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

- BY** - Public byway
- CT** - Cycletrack (cycles only)
- CP** - Cycletrack (pedestrian)
- FP** - Public footpath
- FW** - Public footway (Pavement)
- BW** - Public bridleway
- KB** - Restricted byway
- RD** - Public road

### Coastal Margin

#### Explanatory note

Part 3 of the Overview to the report explains where the landward boundary of the coastal margin falls by default. Our proposals include any suggested variation of this default boundary. The purple wash on the map indicates where as a result of our proposals the coastal margin would extend significantly to the landward side of the proposed route of the trail. The coastal margin may include some areas where coastal access rights do not apply, either seaward or landward of the proposed route of the trail: the Overview explains more about this. The landward boundary of the coastal margin may in due course move inland, if the trail rolls back under proposals in this report to respond to coastal change.

- Coastal margin landward of the trail
- Coastal margin landward of the trail which is existing access land

### Other Information

#### Other access rights and routes

- Public footpaths
- Public byways
- Public bridleways
- Restricted byways
- Sustrans national routes
- Existing access land

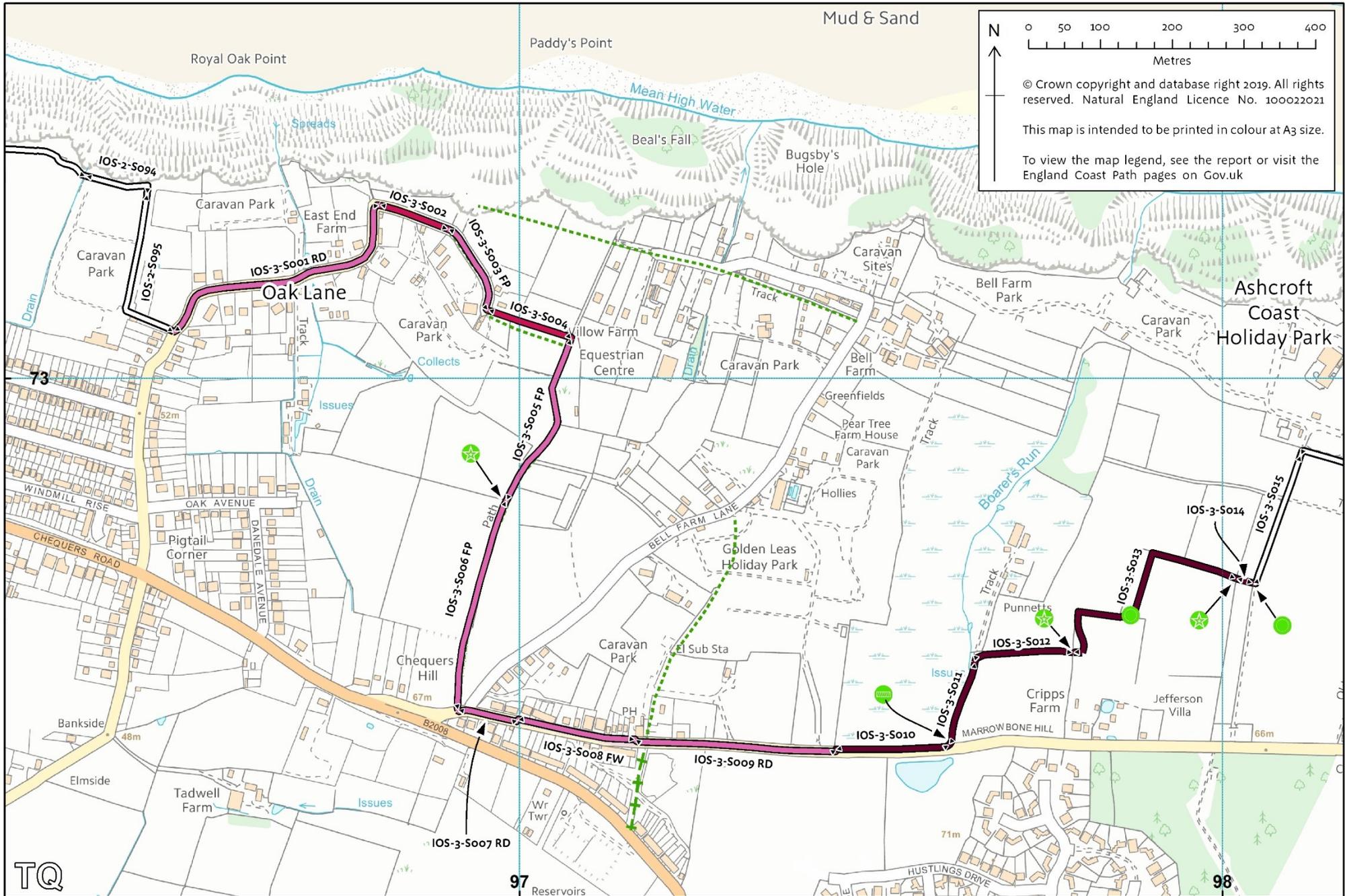
### Infrastructure types (for status see below)

- |                  |                      |                      |
|------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| barrier          | cycle chicane        | hurdle               |
| boardwalk        | drainage             | ramp                 |
| bollard          | drop-kerb            | revetment            |
| clapper bridge   | gap in fence         | stepping stones      |
| footbridge       | Bristol gate         | steps                |
| quad bike bridge | field gate           | ladder stile         |
| sleeper bridge   | kissing gate         | lift-up stile        |
| vehicle bridge   | pedestrian gate      | squeeze stile        |
| cattle grid      | wheelchair gate      | step stile           |
| culvert          | gateway with no gate | stone stile          |
|                  |                      | interpretation panel |

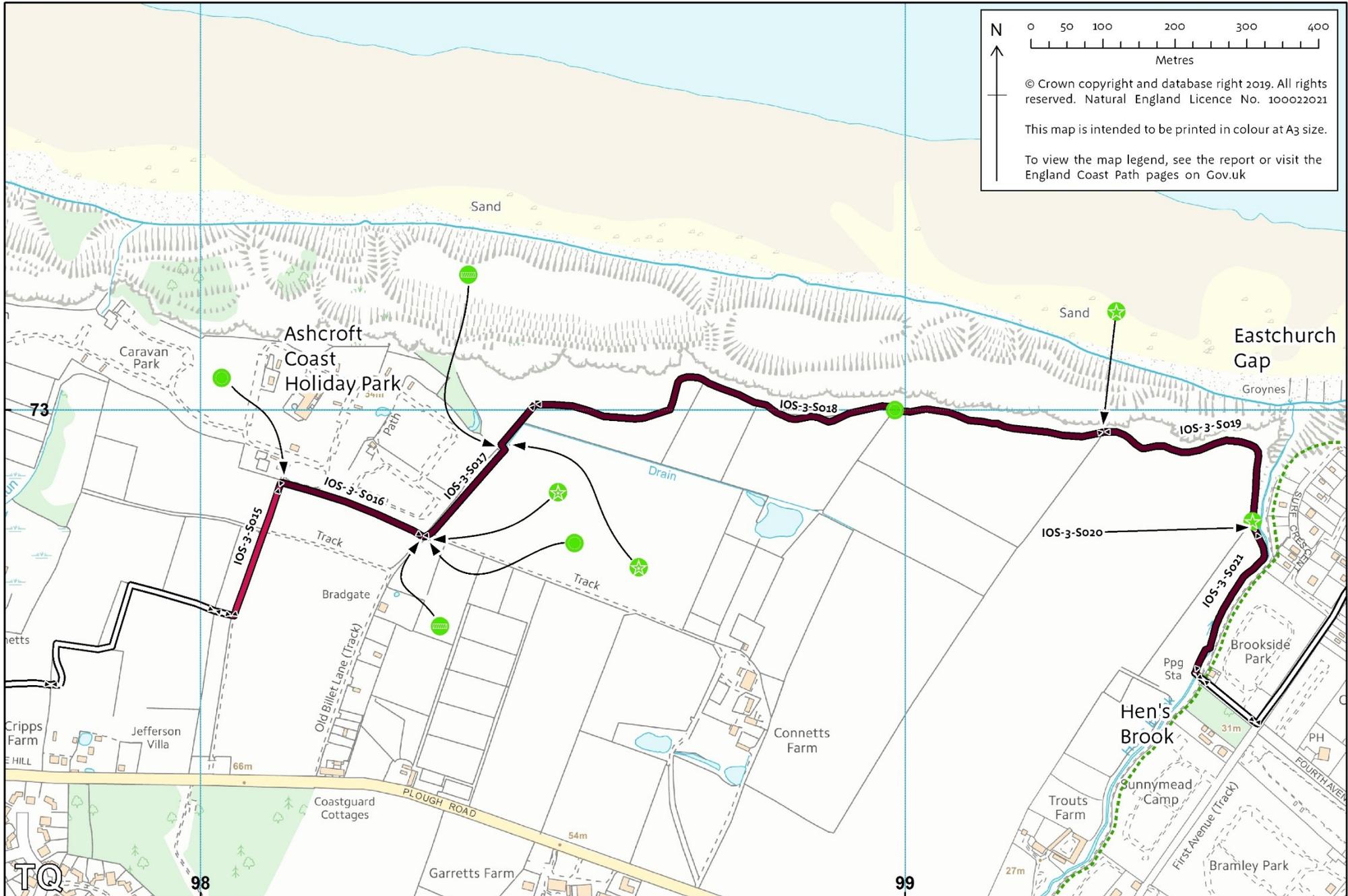
### Infrastructure status

Infrastructure status will be indicated by one of three colours, as shown in the example below:

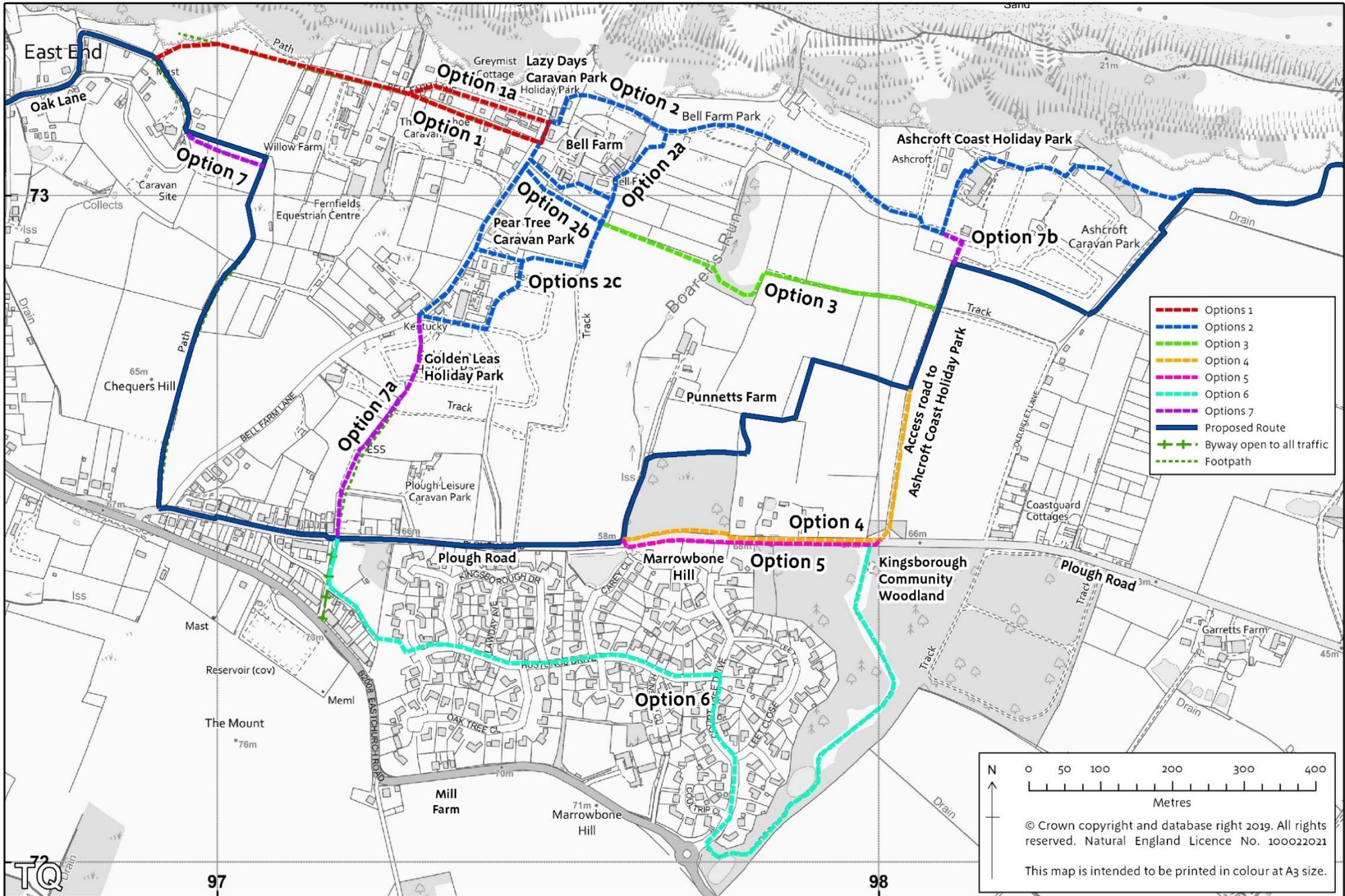
- Existing steps to be retained
- New steps required
- Existing steps to be removed



Map IOS 3b: Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park to Hen's Brook



Map IOS 3b: Ashcroft Coast Holiday Park to Hen's Brook



**Directions Map IOS 3A**

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.

