



England Coast Path Stretch: Aldeburgh to Hopton-on-Sea

Report AHS 6: Lowestoft to Hopton-on-Sea

Part 6.1: Introduction

Start Point:	Links Road, Lowestoft (grid reference: TM 5503 9531)
End Point:	Beach Road, Hopton-on-Sea (grid reference: TM 5357 9972)
Relevant Maps:	AHS 6a to AHS 6c

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

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

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

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

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

Part 6.2: Proposals Narrative

The trail:

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

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

6.2.3 Includes two sections of new path:

- one between Potter's Leisure Resort and Broadland Sands Holiday Park on sections AHS-6-S035 and AHS-6-S036 (Map AHS 6c); and
- one a small section at Tramp's Alley on section AHS-6-S008 (Map AHS 6a). See part 6.3 for details.

6.2.4 Is aligned on the dunes at Gunton Denes on sections AHS-6-S001 to AHS-6-S003 (Map AHS 6a). See part 6.3 for details.

6.2.5 In some areas such as through Corton (sections AHS-6-S015 to AHS-6-S-031 on Map AHS 6b), an inland alignment is necessary to take the trail past the Ocean Glade Seaview Woodland Lodges, Azure Seas Holiday Village, Corton Beach Holiday Village, Warner Corton Coastal Village, Waterside Park and Corton Villas, Wy-Wurry Caravan Park, Rising Sun Caravan Park; and houses and gardens which are currently inaccessible because they occupy excepted land with no clear through-route.

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.

6.2.6 The following designated sites affect this length of coast:

- Corton Cliffs Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its geological interest
- Southern North Sea Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Outer Thames Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA)

6.2.7 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.

6.2.8 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; 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:

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

- the trail would follow an uneven grass or bare soil path along the cliff top;
- there are steps in places where it would be necessary to link the cliff top in Gunton Warren to the lower part of the trail at section AHS-6-S004 (Map AHS 6a).

6.2.10 At the following locations, the trail will be made easier to use by:

- installing steps and new revetment within the local nature reserve, Gunton Warren (sections AHS-6-S003 to AHS-6-S004 on Map AHS 6a);
- replacing the existing gate at the entrance to the Azure Seas caravan park from Tramps Alley between sections AHS-6-S009 and AHS-6-S010 on Map AHS 6a.

We envisage this happening before the new access rights come into force as part of the physical establishment work described in part 7 of the Overview.

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

Where we have proposed exercising statutory discretions:

6.2.11 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 6.3.1 below.

6.2.12 Additional landward margin:

Between sections AHS-6-S001 and AHS-6-S006 (Map AHS 6a) at Gunton Denes and Gunton Warren, Lowestoft, we have used our discretion to propose the inclusion of additional, more extensive landward areas within the coastal margin, to secure or enhance public enjoyment of this part of the coast. The owner of this land is content for us to propose this.

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

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

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

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

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

6.2.15 Column 4 of Table 6.3.1 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 AHS 6a to 6c as the proposed route of the trail.

6.2.16 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:

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

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

Establishment of the trail:

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

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

6.2.19 Our estimate of the capital costs for physical establishment of the trail on the proposed route within Report AHS 6 is £14,707 and is informed by:

- information already held by the access authority, Suffolk County Council, in relation to the management of the existing Suffolk Coast Path and 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.

6.2.20 There are four main elements to the overall cost:

- Installation of steps and new revetment at Gunton Warren (section AHS-6-S004 on Map AHS 6a)
- Replacement of a gate at Azure Seas caravan park (sections AHS-6-S009 and AHS-6-S010 on Map AHS 6a)
- Signage, especially at fast-eroding stretches of cliff (for example along sections AHS-6-S031 and AHS-6-S032 on Map AHS 6b)
- Clearance of vegetation where the trail meets Church Road in Corton (between sections AHS-6-029 and AHS-6-S030 on Map AHS 6b)

Table 1 shows our estimate of the capital cost within Report AHS 6 for each of the main elements of physical establishment described above.

Table 1: Estimate of capital costs

Item	Cost
Signs & interpretation	£5,495
Steps	£800
Clearance of vegetation	£400
Revetment	£700
Gates/removal of barriers/ boundary crossings	£1,290
Headland creation	£2,423
Surfacing works	£320
Project management	£3,279
Total	£14,707 (Exclusive of any VAT payable)

6.2.21 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, Suffolk 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:

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

6.2.23 We estimate that the annual cost to maintain the trail within Report AHS 6 will be £3,444 (exclusive of any VAT payable). In developing this estimate we have taken account of the formula used to calculate Natural England's contribution to the maintenance of other National Trails.

Part 6.3: Proposals Tables

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

6.3.1 Section Details: Maps 6a to 6c: Lowestoft to Hopton-on-Sea

Key notes on table:

1. Column 2 – an asterisk (*) against the route section number means see also Table 6.3.2: 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.
3. Column 4 – ‘Yes – see Table 6.3.3’ means roll-back is proposed, but refer to that table below about our likely approach to implementing it for this route section. This is because a more complex situation exists in this case and consideration must be given to how roll-back may happen in relation to excepted land, a protected site etc.
4. Column 5a - Certain coastal land types are included automatically in the coastal margin where they fall landward of the trail if they touch it at some point. The relevant land type (foreshore, cliff, bank, barrier, dune, beach, flat or section 15 land – see Glossary) is shown in this column where appropriate. “No” means none present on this route section.
5. Columns 5b and 5c – Any entry in these columns means we are proposing to align the landward boundary of the coastal margin on this route section with the physical feature(s) shown in 5b, for the reason in 5c. No text here means that for this route section the landward edge of the margin would be that of the trail itself - or if any default coastal land type is shown in 5a, that would be its landward boundary instead.

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Current status of route section(s)	Roll-back proposed? (See Part 7 of Overview)	Landward margin contains coastal land type?	Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary proposal	Explanatory notes
AHS 6a	AHS-6-S001 and AHS-6-S002	Other existing walked route	Yes - normal	Yes - dune	Fence line	Additional landward area	
AHS 6a	AHS-6-S003	Other existing walked route	Yes - normal	Yes - dune	Road	Additional landward area	
AHS 6a	AHS-6-S004 to AHS-6-S006	Other existing walked route	Yes - normal	No	Road	Additional landward area	

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Current status of route section(s)	Roll-back proposed? (See Part 7 of Overview)	Landward margin contains coastal land type?	Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary proposal	Explanatory notes
AHS 6a	AHS-6-S007	Public highway	Yes - normal	No	Road	Clarity and cohesion	Landward edge of margin extends to seaward edge of Corton Road
AHS 6a	AHS-6-S008	Not an existing walked route	Yes - normal	No			
AHS 6a	AHS-6-S009	Public footpath	Yes - normal	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	
AHS 6a	AHS-6-S010*	Other existing walked route	Yes - normal	No			
AHS 6a	AHS-6-S011*	Other existing walked route	Yes – see table 6.2.3	No			
AHS 6b	AHS-6-S012*	Other existing walked route	Yes – see table 6.2.3	No	Track	Clarity and cohesion	Access strip defined by width of tarmac track
AHS 6b	AHS-6-S013*	Other existing walked route	Yes – see table 6.2.3	No			
AHS 6b	AHS-6-S014*	Public highway	Yes – see table 6.2.3	No			Trail crosses road
AHS 6b	AHS-6-S015*	Public footway (pavement)	Yes – see table 6.2.3	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Current status of route section(s)	Roll-back proposed? (See Part 7 of Overview)	Landward margin contains coastal land type?	Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary proposal	Explanatory notes
AHS 6b	AHS-6-S016*	Public highway	Yes – see table 6.2.3	No			Trail crosses road
AHS 6b	AHS-6-S017*	Public footway (pavement)	Yes – see table 6.2.3	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
AHS 6b	AHS-6-S018*	Public highway	Yes – see table 6.2.3	No			Trail crosses road
AHS 6b	AHS-6-S019*	Public footway (pavement)	Yes – see table 6.2.3	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
AHS 6b	AHS-6-S020*	Public highway	Yes – see table 6.2.3	No			Trail crosses road
AHS 6b	AHS-6-S021*	Public highway	Yes – see table 6.2.3	No			Trail follows road for a short distance
AHS 6b	AHS-6-S022*	Public footway (pavement)	Yes – see table 6.2.3	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
AHS 6b	AHS-6-S023*	Public highway	Yes – see table 6.2.3	No			Trail crosses road
AHS 6b	AHS-6-S024*	Public footway (pavement)	Yes – see table 6.2.3	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
AHS 6b	AHS-6-S025*	Public highway	Yes – see table 6.2.3	No			Trail crosses road
AHS 6b	AHS-6-S026*	Public footway (pavement)	Yes – see table 6.2.3	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
AHS 6b	AHS-6-S027*	Public highway	Yes – see table 6.2.3	No			Trail crosses road

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
AHS 6b	AHS-6-S028*	Public footway (pavement)	Yes – see table 6.2.3	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
AHS 6b	AHS-6-S029*	Public highway	Yes – see table 6.2.3	No			Tarmac road and grass verge
AHS 6b	AHS-6-S030	Public footpath	Yes - normal	No			
AHS 6b	AHS-6-S031 and AHS-6-S032	Other existing walked route	Yes - normal	No			
AHS 6c	AHS-6-S033 and AHS-6-S034	Other existing walked route	Yes - normal	No			
AHS 6c	AHS-6-S035 and AHS-6-S036	Not an existing walked route	Yes - normal	No			
AHS 6c	AHS-6-S037 and AHS-6-S038	Other existing walked route	Yes - normal	No	Track	Clarity and cohesion	
AHS 6c	AHS-6-S039	Other existing walked route	Yes - normal	No	Tree line	Clarity and cohesion	
AHS 6c	AHS-6-S040	Other existing walked route	Yes - normal	No			
AHS 6c	AHS-6-S041	Cycleway	Yes - normal	Yes - barrier			

6.3.2 Other options considered: Maps 6a to 6c: Lowestoft to Hopton-on-Sea

Map(s)	Route section numbers(s)	Other option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
AHS 6a and AHS 6b	AHS-5-S010 to AHS-5-S012	We considered aligning the trail along Corton Road, B1385	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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.
AHS 6a and AHS 6b	AHS-5-S010 to AHS-5-S029	We considered aligning the trail along the base of the cliffs through Corton on a seawall	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the seawall is sometimes buried in sediment and subject to frequent local closures. It is also subject to sea spray or inundation at high tides; ■ 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; ■ under our proposals, the seawall and access points to it would remain available for people to use as part of the spreading room.

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.

6.3.3 Roll-back implementation – more complex situations: Maps 6a to 6c: Lowestoft to Hopton-on-Sea

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Feature(s) or site(s) potentially affected	Our likely approach to roll-back
AHS 6a	AHS-6-S011	Corton Road and Pleasurewood Hills Park and pond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ If it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of the road, pond or holiday park, we will choose a new route after detailed discussions with all relevant interests, either (a) to pass through the site / course, or (b) if this is not practicable, to pass somewhere on the landward side of it. ■ 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.
AHS 6b	AHS-6-S012 to AHS-6-S029	Buildings and curtilage, Corton High Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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. ■ 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.

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 6.4: Proposals Maps

6.4.1 Map Index

Map reference	Map title
AHS 6a	Links Road, Lowestoft to Corton Woods
AHS 6b	Corton Woods to Broadland Sands Holiday Park
AHS 6c	Broadland Sands Holiday Park to Beach Road, Hopton-on-Sea



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

North





