



England Coast Path Stretch: Isle of Wight

Report IOW 9: Gurnard Luck to West Cowes Chain Ferry

Part 9.1: Introduction

Start Point:	Gurnard Luck (grid reference 447104.767, 95328.119)
End Point:	West Cowes Chain Ferry (grid reference 449939.572, 95676.985)
Relevant Maps:	IOW 9a to IOW 9c

9.1.1 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 the Isle of Wight coast.

9.1.2 This report covers length IOW 9 of the stretch, which is the coast between Gurnard Luck and West Cowes Chain Ferry. 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.

9.1.3 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.

9.1.4 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 9.2: Proposals Narrative

The trail:

9.2.1 Follows existing walked routes, including public rights of way, along this length.

9.2.2 Mainly follows the coastline quite closely and maintains good views of the sea. There is one minor inland diversion between IOW-9-S009 and IOW-9-S022 to avoid properties seaward of Solent View Road.

9.2.3 Is aligned on the beach or foreshore at Gurnard Bay. See part 9.2.8 for details.

9.2.4 Follows a route similar to the existing Isle of Wight Coast Path but departs from this in places in order to take walkers closer to the coast.

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.

9.2.5 The following designated sites affect this length of coast:

- Solent and Dorset Coast SPA
- Solent Maritime SAC

Map C in the Overview shows the extent of designated areas listed.

9.2.6 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.

9.2.7 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:

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

- The trail would follow the narrow seawall at Gurnard Bay;
- The trail would follow an uneven and sometimes steep bare soil path through Spencer's Wood.

9.2.9 At Gurnard seawall, walkers will have the option to continue along the road rather than ascending the seawall. Walkers will be informed of this informal option with two maps and an advisory note at either

end of the seawall route section. The arrangement would be put in place without the use of a formal alternative route to give effect to it formally.

9.2.10 At Spencer's Wood, new steps will be constructed, so as to make it easier to ascend/descend steep slopes. We envisage this happening as part of the physical establishment work described below. The site is too steep for ramps to be used to ascend/descend the slope.

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

Where we have proposed exercising statutory discretions:

9.2.11 **Estuary:** This report proposes that the trail should contain sections aligned on the estuary of the River Medina, extending upstream from the open coast. Natural England proposes to exercise its functions as if the sea included the estuarial waters of the River Medina, as indicated by the extent of the trail shown on Overview Map A4: Estuarial Waters of the River Medina. This report includes the waters of the River Medina as far upstream as Medina Road, near the West Cowes Chain Ferry (see map IOW 9c). The River Medina is also included in our proposals of Report IOW10.

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

9.2.12 **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 9.3.1 below.

9.2.13 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 9.3.1. 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 9.3.1] 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.

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

Direction to exclude access to the mudflat at shoreline close to Cowes

9.2.15 Access to the land in the coastal margin seaward of route section IOW-9-S052 is to be excluded all year-round by direction under Section 25A the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) as it is mudflat that is unsuitable for public access. The exclusion does not affect the route itself and will have no legal effect on land where coastal access rights do not apply.

The mudflat in this report is soft and sinking. It does not provide a safe walking surface and is subject to frequent tidal inundation. RNLI and Coastguard data indicates incidents of people being rescued from the mud. See Direction Map IOW 9A for further details.

9.2.16 This direction 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.

9.2.17 The directions we give are intended to avoid any new public rights being created over the area in question in view of the hidden dangers associated with mudflats, which new users of the land would not be aware of.

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

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

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

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

9.2.19 Column 4 of table 9.3.1 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 IOW 9a as the proposed route of the trail.

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

On sections for which roll-back is not proposed in table 9.3.1, the route is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps IOW 9b and IOW 9c as the proposed route of the trail.

Other future change:

9.2.21 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:

9.2.22 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.

9.2.23 Our estimate of the capital costs for physical establishment of the trail on the proposed route is £28,277 and is informed by:

- information already held by the access authority, Isle of Wight Council, in relation to the management of the existing Isle of Wight Coast Path;

- the conclusions of our deliberations in relation to potential impacts on the environment; and
- information gathered while visiting affected land and talking to the people who own and manage it about the options for the route.

9.2.24 There are four main elements to the overall cost:

- A significant number of new waymarkers would be needed on the trail, in particular on route sections where the proposed route differs from that of the existing Isle of Wight Coast Path.
- Any interpretation and information boards with outdated information about the existing route of the Isle of Wight Coast Path would require replacement.
- The surfaces and access furniture of the existing paths and footways on the proposed route are generally of a suitable standard for the trail, but there are some places where new steps, boardwalks, footbridges and surface upgrades would enhance the convenience of the trail. More significant items of establishment works are shown on the relevant maps accompanying this report.
- Scrub clearance of a new route and improvement of defacto walked routes, within Spencers Wood.

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

Table 1: Estimate of capital costs

Item	Cost
Signs & interpretation	£2,752
Steps	£7,000
Boardwalks	£6,000
Scrub clearance	£1,000
Footbridges	£1,000
Surfacing works	£4,000
Project management & variance	£6,525

Total **£28,277.00 (Exclusive of any VAT payable)**

9.2.25 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, Isle of Wight 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:

9.2.26 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).

9.2.27 We estimate that the annual cost to maintain the trail will be £608.32 (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 9.3: Proposals Tables

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

9.3.1 Section Details: Maps IOW 9a to IOW 9c – Gurnard Luck to West Cowes Chain Ferry

Key notes on table:

1. Column 2 – an asterisk (*) against the route section number means see also table 9.3.2: 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 9.3.3’ 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
IOW 9a	IOW-9-S001 & IOW-9-S002*	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
IOW 9a	IOW-9-S003*	Public footpath	Yes - See table 9.3.3	No	Edge of path	Clarity and cohesion	
IOW 9a	IOW-9-S004 to IOW-9-S009*	Public footpath	Yes - See table 9.3.3	Yes - Barrier			

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
IOW 9a	IOW-9-S010*	Public bridleway	Yes - See table 9.3.3	No	Various	Clarity and cohesion	Landward boundary comprises of fence line and wall
IOW 9a	IOW-9-S011*	Public highway	No	No			
IOW 9a	IOW-9-S012*	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
IOW 9a	IOW-9-S013 to IOW-9-S021*	Other existing walked route	Yes - See table 9.3.3	No			
IOW 9a	IOW-9-S022 to IOW-9-S031*	Other existing walked route	Yes - See table 9.3.3	Yes - Barrier			
IOW 9a	IOW-9-S032	Public highway	No	No			
IOW 9a	IOW-9-S033	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Various	Clarity and cohesion	Landward boundary comprises of fence and shop front
IOW 9a	IOW-9-S034	Public highway	No	No			
IOW 9a	IOW-9-S035	Public footway (pavement)	No	Yes - Barrier			

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
IOW 9a & IOW 9b	IOW-9-S036 to IOW-9-S040	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
IOW 9b	IOW-9-S041	Public footway (pavement)	No	Yes - Barrier			
IOW 9b	IOW-9-S042	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Wall	Clarity and cohesion	
IOW 9b	IOW-9-S043	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
IOW 9c	IOW-9-S044	Other existing walked route	No	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	
IOW 9c	IOW-9-S045*	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
IOW 9c	IOW-9-S046*	Other existing walked route	No	No	Wall	Clarity and cohesion	
IOW 9c	IOW-9-S047	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
IOW 9c	IOW-9-S048	Public highway	No	No	Edge of road	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
IOW 9c	IOW-9-S049 & IOW-9-S050	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
IOW 9c	IOW-9-S051	Public highway	No	No	Edge of road	Clarity and cohesion	
IOW 9c	IOW-9-S052	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	

9.3.2 Other options considered: Map IOW 9a – Gurnard Luck to Prince’s Esplanade & IOW 9c – Cowes Castle to West Cowes Chain Ferry

Map(s)	Route section numbers(s)	Other option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
IOW 9a	IOW-9-S003 to IOW-9-S010	We considered aligning the trail along Marsh Road.	We opted for the proposed route because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ It is closer to the sea and maintains views of the sea. ■ It follows an existing well used public right of way
IOW 9a	IOW-9-S004 to IOW-9-S021	We considered aligning the trail along the shore from Gurnard Luck to Shore Path as a low tide route. Our proposed route would have been an optional alternative route.	We opted for the proposed route because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The intertidal area along this stretch is a mixture of mud, sand and clay, interspersed with large slippery boulders and was considered unsafe for walkers. ■ There would be no adequate escape routes for walkers if they were to get caught out by the rising tide.
IOW 9a	IOW-9-S015 to IOW-9-S017	We considered aligning the trail along a separate de facto route through Spencer’s Wood, to the north-west of the proposed route.	We opted for the proposed route because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ It is a more direct route to the coast. ■ It avoids directing walkers through an area known to be polluted with asbestos.
IOW 9a	IOW-9-S013 to IOW-9-S031	We considered aligning the trail to follow the existing Isle of Wight Coast Path along Winding Way and Shore Road.	We opted for the proposed route because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ It is closer to the sea and would afford better sea views. ■ It is made with the support of the landowner and locals.
IOW 9c	IOW-9-S045 & IOW-9-S046	We considered aligning the trail to follow Bath Road before joining The Parade.	We opted for the proposed route because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ It is closer to the coast and maintains better coastal views ■ It avoids crossing a road.

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.

9.3.3 Roll-back implementation – more complex situations: Map IOW 9a – Gurnard Luck to Prince’s Esplanade

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Feature(s) or site(s) potentially affected	Our likely approach to roll-back
IOW 9a	IOW-9-S003 to IOW-9-S010	Marsh Road dinghy park, buildings and curtilage.	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.
IOW 9a	IOW-9-S013 to IOW-9-S031	Shore Road and Shore Path buildings and curtilage.	

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 9.4: Proposals Maps

9.4.1 Map Index

Map reference	Map title
IOW 9a	Gurnard Luck to Prince's Esplanade
IOW 9b	Prince's Esplanade to Cowes Castle
IOW 9c	Cowes Castle to West Cowes Chain Ferry
Direction Map IOW 9A	West Cowes

PROPOSALS

Trail Sections

- Trail using existing public right of way or highway
- Trail using other existing walked route
- Trail not using existing walked route
- Alternative route
- Trail shown on other maps
- Approved or open England Coast Path

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

- Trail using existing South West Coast Path
- Alternative or optional alternative route using existing South West Coast Path

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

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

Coastal Margin

Explanatory note

Part 3 of the Overview to the report explains where the landward boundary of the coastal margin falls by default. Our proposals include any suggested variation of this default boundary. The purple wash on the map indicates where as a result of our proposals the coastal margin would extend significantly to the landward side of the proposed route of the trail. The coastal margin may include some areas where coastal 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 bridleways
- Public byways
- Public footpaths
- Restricted byways
- South West Coast Path
- Sustrans national routes
- Existing access land

Infrastructure types

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

Bridges:

- Clapper bridge
- Footbridge
- Quad bike bridge
- Sleeper bridge
- Vehicle bridge

Stiles:

- Ladder stile
- Lift-up stile
- Squeeze stile
- Step stile
- Stone stile

Gates:

- Bristol gate
- Field gate
- Gateway with no gate
- Kissing gate
- Pedestrian gate
- Wheelchair gate

Miscellaneous:

- Barrier
- Boardwalk
- Bollard
- Cattle grid
- Culvert
- Motorbike barrier
- Cycle chicane
- Drainage
- Drop-kerb
- Gap in fence
- Hurdle
- Roadside sign
- Interpretation panel
- Ramp
- Revetment
- Stepping stones
- Steps
- Advisory sign

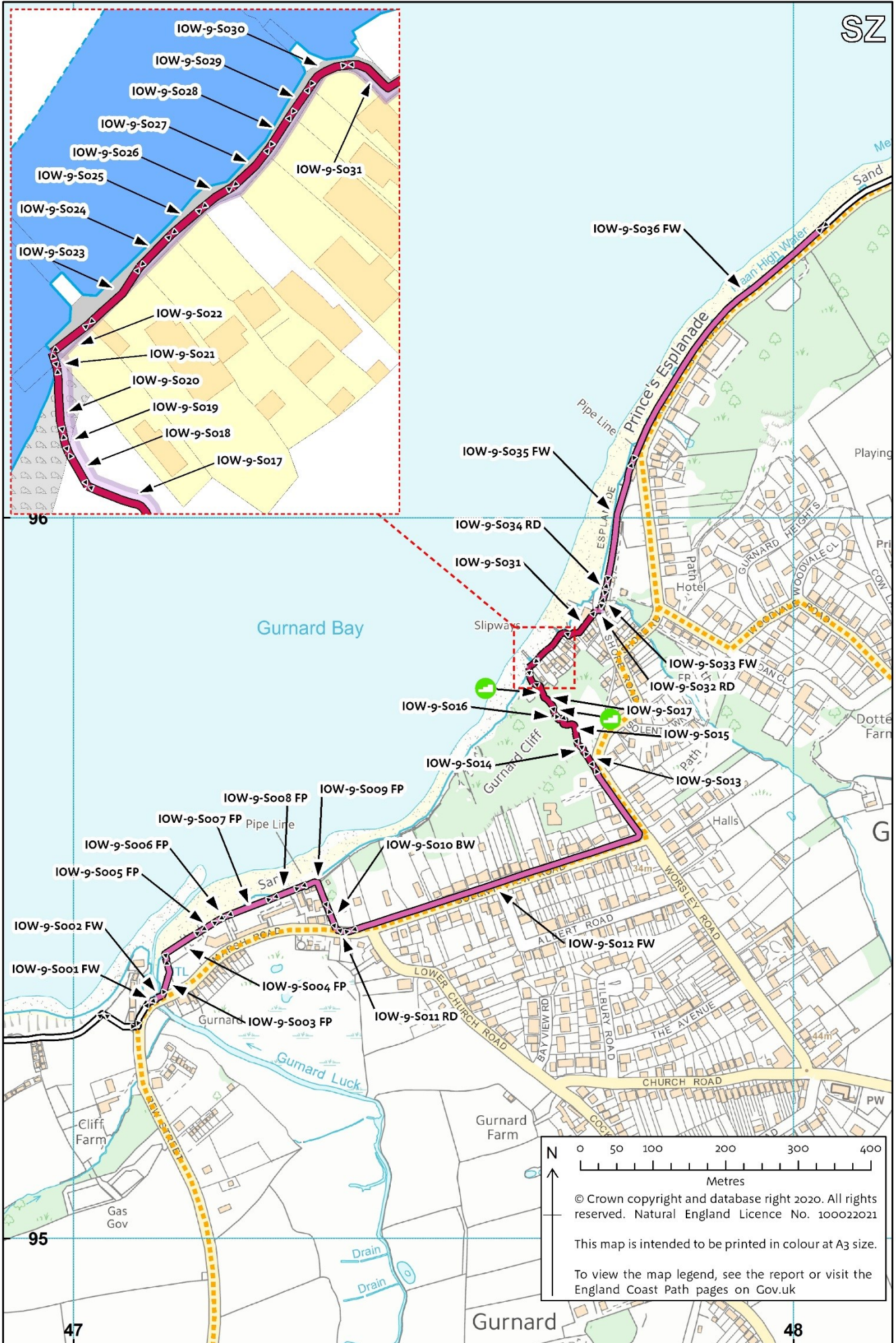
Infrastructure status

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

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

* Please note that the items in this legend may not all be present on an individual map or report.

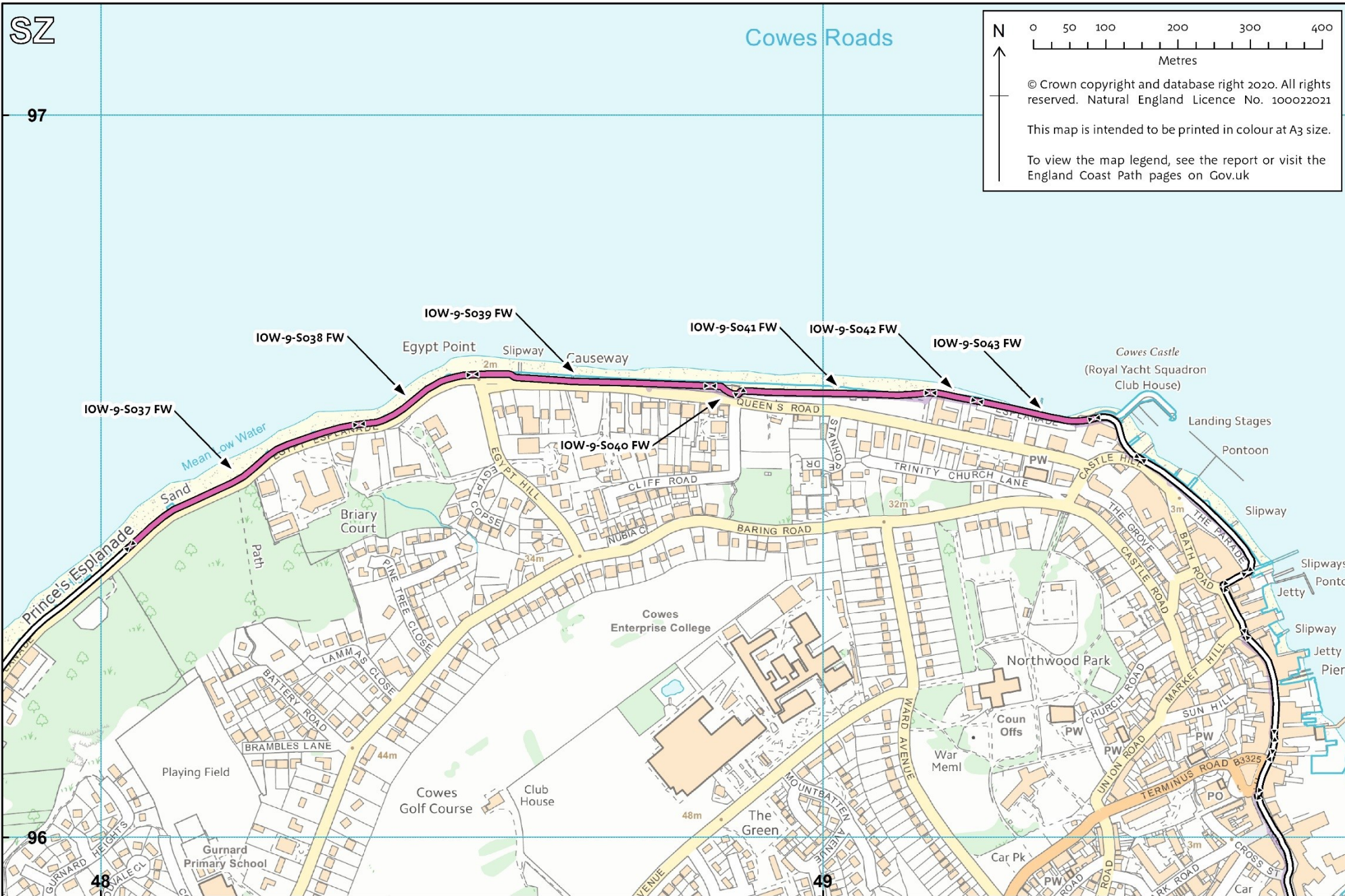
Map IOW 9a: Gurnard Luck to Prince's Esplanade



Map IOW 9a: Gurnard Luck to Prince's Esplanade

0 50 100 200 300 400
Metres
© Crown copyright and database right 2020. All rights reserved. Natural England Licence No. 100022021
This map is intended to be printed in colour at A3 size.
To view the map legend, see the report or visit the England Coast Path pages on Gov.uk

Map IOW 9b: Prince's Esplanade to Cowes Castle



© Crown copyright and database right 2020. All rights reserved. Natural England Licence No. 100022021

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

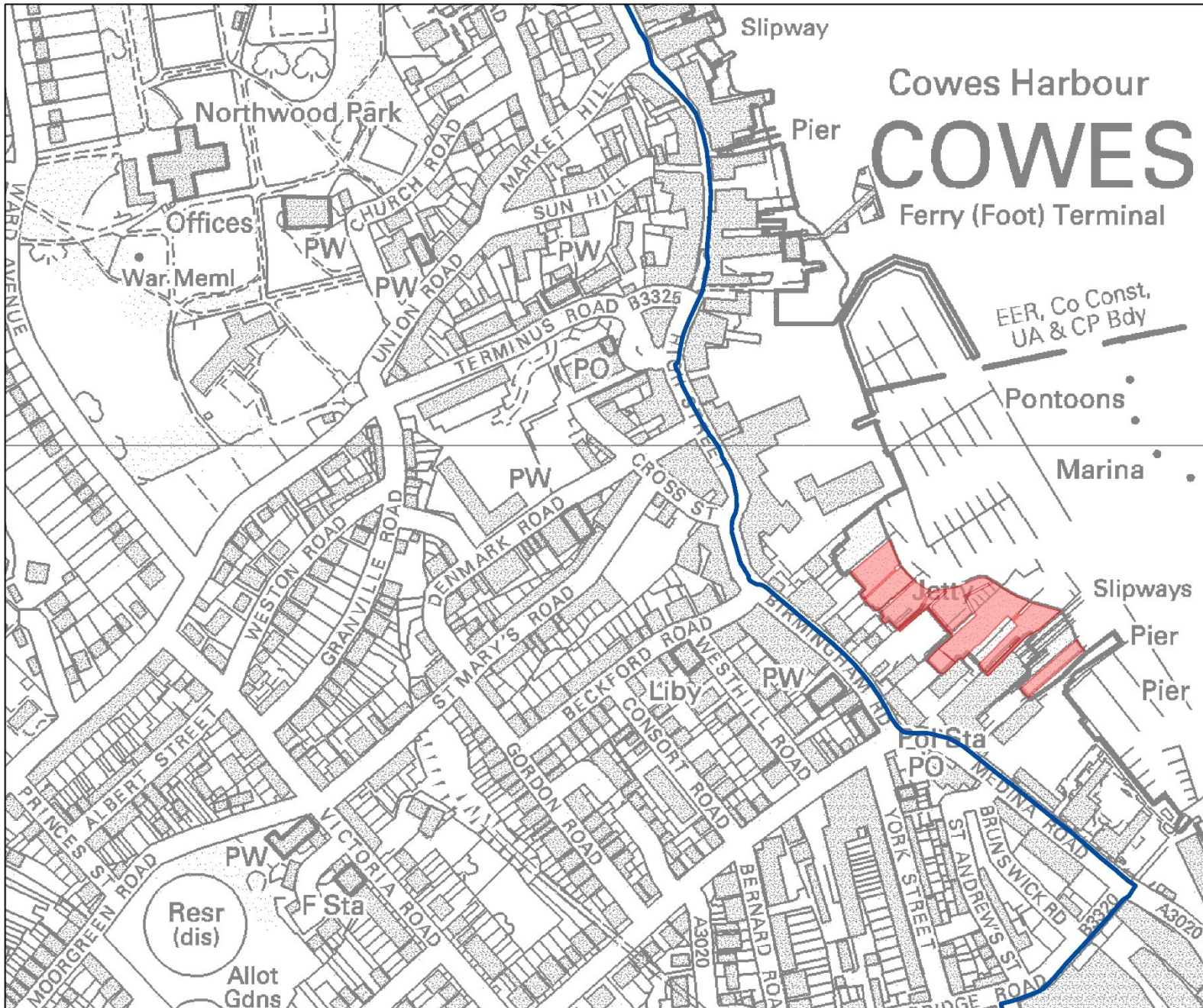
To view the map legend, see the report or visit the England Coast Path pages on Gov.uk

SZ

N
 0 50 100 200 300 400
 Metres
 © Crown copyright and database right 2020. All rights reserved. Natural England Licence No. 10002021
 This map is intended to be printed in colour at A3 size.
 To view the map legend, see the report or visit the England Coast Path pages on Gov.uk



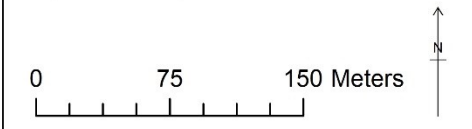
Directions Map IOW 9A



Trail Sections
 — Proposed route

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

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.



© Crown copyright and database right 2020. All rights reserved. Natural England Licence No. 100022021