

# England Coast Path Stretch: Hunstanton to Sutton Bridge

## Report HSB 1: Hunstanton to Beach Road, Shepherd's Port

### Part 1.1: Introduction

Start Point:	Salad Bowl Café Hunstanton (Grid reference TF6726 4131)
End Point:	Beach Road, Shepherd's Port (Grid reference TF6471 3350)
Relevant Maps:	HSB 1a to HSB 1e

1.1.1 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 Hunstanton and Sutton Bridge.

1.1.2 This report covers length HSB1 of the stretch, which is the coast between Salad Bowl Café Hunstanton and Beach Road, Shepherd's Port. 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.

1.1.3 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.

1.1.4 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 1.2: Proposals Narrative

### The trail:

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

1.2.2 Follows the coastline closely, maintaining good views of the sea for most of this length but goes inland at South Beach Heacham on a public footpath to avoid seaward constraints (see Other Options Considered, below).

1.2.3 The existing Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path National Trail ends at Hunstanton but at a point slightly inland and closer to the town centre. This stretch of ECP joins the existing National Trail before its end point and creates a route to the promenade. This decision therefore leaves a short length into Hunstanton that will continue to be the Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path National Trail. If the Secretary of State approves our proposed route for the England Coast Path along this length of coast, we will discuss with Norfolk County Council whether to modify the current end point of the existing national trail to coincide with the proposed route for the England Coast Path. This would be achieved by means of a separate variation report to the Secretary of State.

1.2.4 Is aligned on the beach or foreshore at North Beach Heacham.

### 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.

1.2.5 The following designated sites affect this length of coast:

- The Wash Special Protection Area (SPA)
- The Greater Wash Special Protection Area (SPA)
- The Wash and North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- The Wash Ramsar wetland
- The Wash Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Hunstanton Cliffs Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Maps C1 and C2 in the Overview shows the extent of designated areas listed.

The following table brings together design features included in our access proposals to help to protect the environment along this length of the coast.

#### 1.2.6 Measures to protect the environment

Map(s)	Route section numbers	Design features of the access proposals	Reason included
HSB 1c to 1e	HSB -1-S034 to S039	■ The trail at South Beach Heacham is aligned inland	To prevent disturbance of breeding and feeding birds on the beach by trail users

Map(s)	Route section numbers	Design features of the access proposals	Reason included
HSB 1d	HSB -1-S038	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to grazing marsh within the margin adjacent to the route (HSB-1-S038) along the old seawall from South Beach Road, Heacham to the coastal park will be excluded all year under S26(3)(a) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW).</li> </ul>	The grazing marsh provides priority habitat for breeding and wintering waders and wildfowl, and provides additional supporting habitat to internationally protected species within the Wash SPA. The year round exclusion will limit disturbance from recreational access.
HSB 1d		<p>In addition, we will install:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New 'no access' signs for the excluded area at South Beach Heacham. Current signage asks for dogs to be kept on a lead.</li> </ul>	The grazing marsh provides priority habitat for breeding and wintering waders and wildfowl, and provides additional supporting habitat to internationally protected species within the Wash SPA. The year round exclusion will limit disturbance from recreational access.

1.2.7 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; 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:

1.2.8 There are few artificial barriers to accessibility on the proposed route. The route at Hunstanton is aligned on 4km of concrete promenade that provides step-free and level access. 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:

- At North Beach Heacham the trail would follow bare sand;

- At South Beach Heacham there are steps on to the top of the flood defence bank and a sandy slope up the dunes when the trail moves back to the sea near Shepherd's Port. It is not possible to put any ramp etc at the dunes because of their flood defence function. The trail follows an uneven grass surface along the top of a bank.

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

### Where we have proposed exercising statutory discretions:

**1.2.9 Landward boundary of the coastal margin:** We have used our discretion on some sections of the route to map the landward extent of the coastal margin to an adjacent physical boundary such as a concrete wall, edge of promenade, pavement or track to make the extent of the new access rights clearer. See Table 1.3.1 below. We are proposing to limit coastal margin to the existing walked, surfaced slope between the clifftop and promenade. This is to support the local council's work to reduce access to the cliffs.

1.2.10 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 1.3.1. 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 1.3.1] 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.**

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

#### *Saltmarsh and mudflat*

1.2.12 Access to the flat in the coastal margin seaward of route sections HSB-1-S041 to HSB-1-S042 is to be excluded all year round by direction under S25A of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) as it 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.

1.2.13 In this location the mudflat is at a distance from the coast. See Map HSB E1 and Map HSB E2: Directions to exclude/restrict access - as proposed for area covered by Report HSB 2.

#### *Heacham South Beach*

1.2.14 Access to grazing marsh within the margin between South Beach Road, Heacham and Stubborn Sand, seaward of route section HSB-1-S038, will be excluded all year. This is proposed under Section 26(3)(a) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) to limit disturbance to passage, wintering and breeding birds. See Directions Map HSB E1, the Habitat Regulations Assessment and the Nature Conservation Assessment accompanying this report for further detail.

1.2.15 The grazing marsh provides priority habitat for breeding and wintering waders and wildfowl, and provides additional supporting habitat to internationally protected species within The Wash SPA. The year round exclusion will limit disturbance from recreational access.

1.2.16 The direction we give is intended to avoid any new public rights being created over the area in question in view of the risk of disturbance to sensitive wildlife.

1.2.17 These directions will not prevent or affect:

- any use of the land by existing right [*horse riders*][*cyclists*]: such use is not covered by coastal access rights;
- use of any registered rights of common or of any individual or local rights that operate at common law or by Royal Charter etc.; or
- any use that people already make of the land with the express permission of the landowner, or where such permission is implied by existing signage, site management arrangements etc.

Any such use that already takes place locally is not prohibited or limited by these arrangements - though it remains open to the landowner, as now, to vary any existing permissions.

Where there is a clear and significant pattern of traditional use of an area of land or a coastal route by local people or the wider public for open-air recreation, without any recognised legal right or express or implied permission for them to do so, we have scrutinised particularly carefully any suggestion that such use should be ended or limited under the new arrangements. CROW exclusions of or restrictions on such use are imposed only as a last resort, if the need is pressing and there is clear evidence that the situation cannot be sufficiently improved through improved access management measures on the ground. See section 6.5 of the Coastal Access Scheme for more information on such management measures.

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

1.2.18 **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.

1.2.19 Column 4 of tables 1.3.1 and 1.3.2 indicates where roll-back has been proposed in relation to a route section. Where this is the case, the route, as initially determined at the time the report was prepared, is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps HSB 1a to HSB 1e as the proposed route of the trail.

1.2.20 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 tables 1.3.1 or 1.3.2, the route is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps HSB 1a to HSB 1c as the proposed route of the trail.

### Other future change:

1.2.21 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:

1.2.22 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.

The trail in this report uses existing paths and rights of way.

1.2.23 Our estimate of the capital costs for physical establishment of the trail on the proposed route is £4,600 and is informed by:

- information already held by the access authority, Norfolk County Council, in relation to the management of the existing Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path National Trail and England Coast Path in other parts of the county;
- 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.

The main element of the overall cost is the provision of a number of new items of waymark signage would be needed on the trail

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 and information signs	4,000
Project management	600
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,600 (Exclusive of any VAT payable)</b>

1.2.24 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, Norfolk 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:**

1.2.25 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).

1.2.26 We estimate that the annual cost to maintain the trail will be £2,765 (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 1.3: Proposals Tables

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

### 1.3.1 Section Details: Maps HSB 1a to HSB 1e – Salad Bowl Café Hunstanton to Beach Road, Shepherd’s Port

Key notes on table:

1. Column 2 – an asterisk (\*) against the route section number means see also table 1.3.2: Other options considered.
2. Column 4 – ‘No’ means no roll-back is proposed for this route section
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
HSB 1a	HSB-1-S001 FP	Public footpath - Norfolk Coast Path	No	No	Edge of path	Clarity and cohesion	
HSB 1a	HSB-1-S002	Other existing walked route	Yes – see table 1.3.3	Yes-cliff	Edge of path	Clarity and cohesion	This is a slope between the promenade and clifftop
HSB 1a	HSB-1-S003	Other existing walked route	Yes – see table 1.3.3	No			
HSB 1a	HSB-1-S004	Other existing walked route	Yes – see table 1.3.3	Yes-barrier	Edge of pavement & promenade	Clarity and cohesion	
HSB 1a to	HSB-1-S005	Other existing		Yes-barrier	Edge of promenade	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
HSB 1b		walked route	Yes – see table 1.3.3				
HSB 1b to HSB 1c	HSB-1-S005 cont'd to S032	Other existing walked route	Yes – see table 1.3.3	Yes-barrier	Edge of promenade	Clarity and cohesion	
HSB 1c	HSB-1-S033	Other existing walked route	Yes – see table 1.3.3	Yes - dune			
HSB 1c	HSB-1-S034 RD*	Public highway	Yes – see table 1.3.3	No	Edge of road	Clarity and cohesion	
HSB 1c	HSB-1-S035* FW	Public footway (pavement)	Yes – see table 1.3.3	No	Edge of pavement	Clarity and cohesion	
HSB 1c	HSB-1-S036* RD	Public highway	Yes – see table 1.3.3	No			
HSB 1c	HSB-1-S037*	Other existing walked route	Yes – see table 1.3.3	Yes - bank			
HSB 1d	HSB-1-S038* FP	Public footpath	No	Yes - bank			
HSB 1e	HSB-1-S039*	Other existing walked route	Yes – see table 1.3.3	No			
HSB 1e	HSB-1-S040	Other existing walked route	Yes – see table 1.3.3	Yes - dune			
HSB 1e	HSB-1-S041 FP	Public footpath	Yes – see table 1.3.3	Yes - dune			
HSB 1e	HSB-1-S042 FP	Public footpath	Yes – see table 1.3.3	No	Edge of path	Clarity and cohesion	

### 1.3.2 Other options considered: Maps HSB 1a to HSB 1e – Salad Bowl Café Hunstanton to Beach Road, Shepherd’s Port

Map(s)	Route section numbers	Other options considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
HSB 1a	HSB-1-S001 to S004	We considered joining to the existing end of the Norfolk Coast Path in Hunstanton	We opted for the proposed route because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ It is further from the coast and does not give views of the iconic banded cliffs</li> </ul>
HSB 1c	HSB-1-S033	We considered aligning on the track landward of the route and landward of the dunes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ It is further from the sea and has no seaward views. It is also sand and so has the same surface.</li> </ul>
HSB 1d	HSB-1-S034 to S039	We considered aligning along the beach and dunes between South Beach Heacham and Shepherd’s Port	We opted for the proposed route because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ the beach has breeding ringed plover that may be affected by increased disturbance.</li> <li>■ part of the beach gets covered by high tides.</li> <li>■ this option was not supported by the Environment Agency because of the risk of erosion.</li> </ul>
HSB 1d	HSB-1-S038	We considered aligning along a private road close to properties and a camping site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ we decided there would be a significant change in the level of usage of the track due to additional local usage from holiday accommodation and hence, following guidance in the Scheme it would have a significant impact on privacy.</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.

### 1.3.3 Roll-back implementation – more complex situations: Maps HSB 1a to HSB 1e – Hunstanton to Beach Road, Shepherd’s Port

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Feature(s) or site(s) potentially affected	Our likely approach to roll-back
HSB 1a to HSB 1c	HSB-1-S004 to S042	Low-lying areas of land.	The trail will be adjusted to follow a new route if the existing one is no longer viable as a walking route. Additionally areas landward of the current route that may be unaffected by potential direct roll-back but may need to change to create a linked route to parts of the trail that have rolled-back.

## Part 1.4: Proposals Maps

### 1.4.1 Map Index

Map reference	Map title
HSB 1a	Salad Bowl Café, Hunstanton to North Beach (North)
HSB 1b	Hunstanton to North Beach (South)
HSB 1c	North Beach to South Beach Road
HSB 1d	South Beach Road to Stubborn Sand
HSB 1e	Stubborn Sand to Beach Road, Shepherd's Port
HSB E1	South Beach Heacham: Proposed direction under S26(3)(a) CROW

### 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
- Cycle chicane
- Drainage
- Drop-kerb
- Gap in fence
- Hurdle
- Interpretation panel
- Ramp
- Revetment
- Stepping stones
- Steps

#### 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 HSB 1a - Salad Bowl Cafe, Hunstanton to North Beach, Heacham (section 1)

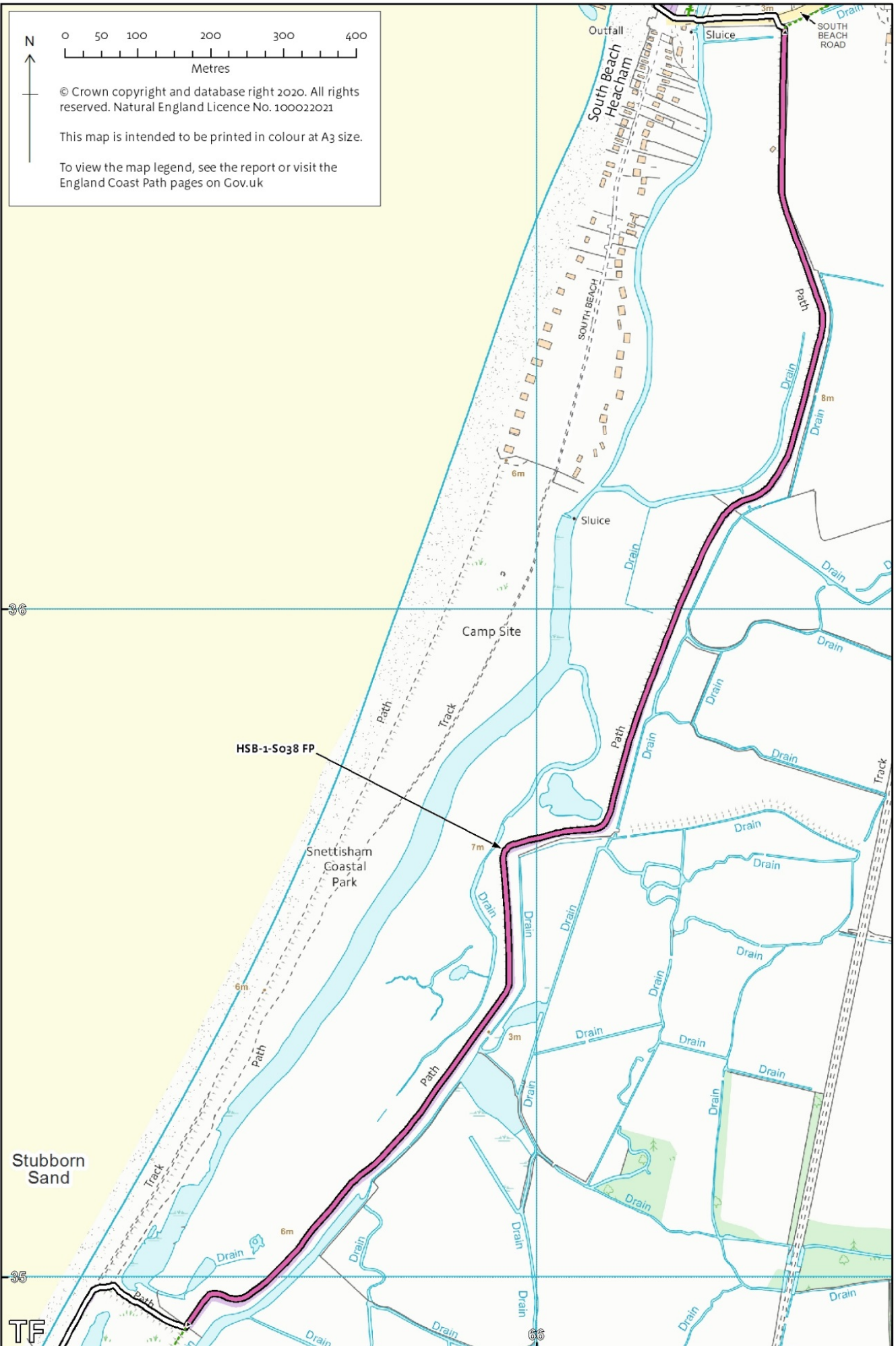
Map HSB 1a - Salad Bowl Cafe, Hunstanton to North Beach, Heacham (section 1)













**Map HSB E1:**

**Directions to exclude/restrict access - as proposed for area covered by Report HSB1**

Map HSB E1: Directions to exclude/restrict access - as proposed for area covered by Report HSB1

**Areas to be covered by proposed access exclusions/restrictions on part of the coast between Hunstanton and Sutton Bridge.**

Restrictions on coastal access rights do not affect public rights of way, or other permitted types of use that may currently exist at a local level.

- Proposed route in this Report
- - - Proposed route shown in another Report
- s26(3)(a) Sensitive wildlife. No public access all year round
- Directions shown in another HSB report



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