

Proposed changes to the King Charles III England Coast Path at East Hill to Cowden Parva

Natural England's Variation Report to the Secretary of State

Coastal Access Variation Report VR19
December 2023

Part 1: Purpose of this report

1.1 Natural England has a statutory duty under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 to improve access to the English coast. The duty is in two parts: one relating to securing a long-distance walking route around the coast; the other to creating an associated “margin” of land for the public to enjoy, either in conjunction with their access along the route line, or otherwise.

1.2 On 18th August 2020 the Secretary of State approved Natural England's proposals relating to [Waxholme to Hornsea](#) which formed part of our proposals for the [Easington to Filey Brigg stretch](#). Whilst the proposals have been approved, Natural England and East Riding of Yorkshire Council are currently working to prepare the trail for public use and as such the coastal access rights for this stretch have yet to commence.

1.3 Since the approval of the report, it has become clear that a change is necessary to the route of the England Coast Path. This report contains Natural England's proposals relating to that change between East Hill and Cowden Parva, near Cowden, which is at the following location shown on the Variation Location Map below.

1.4 In order for this proposed change to come into force it must be approved by the Secretary of State.

1.5 The original stretch [Overview](#) provides vital context to the proposal set out in this VR.



Part 2: Proposed variation at East Hill to Cowden Parva

Start Point: **Grid reference: TA 24674 40071**

End Point: **Grid reference: TA 23819 40346**

Relevant Original Proposal Map: Map 2h Aldbrough to East Hill, Map 2i East Hill to Cowden Parva

2.1 Introduction

Reason for variation:

2.1.1 The land to the north of the approved trail alignment is the Cowden Former Air Weapons Range. Natural England have been requested by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation to move the path on the southern edge FAWR boundary due to operational land management requirements.

Proposed variation:

2.1.2 Our proposal (see map VR19a) is to re-route the path shown as EFB-2-S046 to EFB-2-S050 in our original report. The Original route passed behind East Hill and followed the outer edge of the Former Air Weapons Range (FAWR) at Cowden.

2.1.3 The route proposed initially follows the southern boundary of the residential property at East Hill before joining the existing byway for a short distance and then a public bridleway to the B1242. At this point the trail turns northward and follows the field margin north, with the existing hedgerow separating it from the road. At the northern end of the field, it joins the access road to Cowden FAWR and re-joins the original approved route.

2.1.4 This variation adds the arable field it encloses to the seaward coastal margin.

2.1.5 The proposed variation is on a similar mix of field margin path and trackways as the approved route. It offers slightly improved access for those with reduced mobility with the inclusion of the alignment along the existing byway and bridleway.

Considering the options:

2.1.6 We have worked with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, their contractor, and their neighbouring landowner to develop this variation report. No other options were considered.

2.2 Proposals Narrative

The Trail:

2.2.1 The proposed variation to the approved trail:

- Would follow a newly created section of path on the arable field margins at EFB-VR19-S027 and EFB-VR19-S031.
- Follows existing walked routes at EFB-VR19-S032, including public rights of way including a byway at EFB-VR19-S029 and a public bridleway at EFB-VR19-S030.

- Extends for a length of 2000 metres at a maximum of 1150 metres landward of the approved route.

Protection of the environment:

2.2.2 The section of trail affected by this variation, passes through an area of arable farmland. There are no national or international nature conservation or heritage designations present in this area.

2.2.3 Natural England is satisfied that the proposals for coastal access in this variation report are made in accordance with relevant environmental protection legislation.

Accessibility:

2.2.4 The proposed varied trail is on a similar mix of field margin path and trackways as the approved trail. The arable field margin paths may be unsuitable for some people with reduced mobility because of the nature of the terrain. It offers slightly improved access for those with reduced mobility with the inclusion of the alignment along the existing byway and bridleway.

Where we have proposed exercising statutory discretions:

2.2.5 **Landward boundary of the coastal margin:** We have used our discretion on some sections of the varied 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 2.3.1 below.

2.2.6 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 2.3.1

See part 3 of the Overview to the original report - ‘Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps’, for an 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.

2.2.7 **Restrictions and/or exclusions:** Access rights to the seaward margin would be subject to the excepted land rules and the national restrictions on coastal access rights.

2.2.8 **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.

2.2.9 Column 4 of table 2.3.1 indicates where the roll-back power has been proposed in relation to a newly proposed route section. Where this is the case, the route, as initially determined at the time this report was prepared, is to be at the centre of the line shown on map VR19a as the proposed route of the trail.

2.2.10 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.

Establishment of the trail:

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

2.2.12 Our estimate of the capital costs for these works is £940. This is the same cost as identified for the approved route. These estimates are informed by information already held by the access authority.

2.2.13 The main element to the overall capital costs is signing the route.

2.2.14 If the Secretary of State approves our report, East Riding of Yorkshire Council will liaise with the affected landowners and occupiers about relevant aspects of the establishment works and installation of new signs 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:

2.2.21 Ongoing maintenance of the varied sections of trail would be necessary from time to time. This variation would make no significant change to the annual costs associated with maintaining the approved route.

Part 2.3: Proposals Tables

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

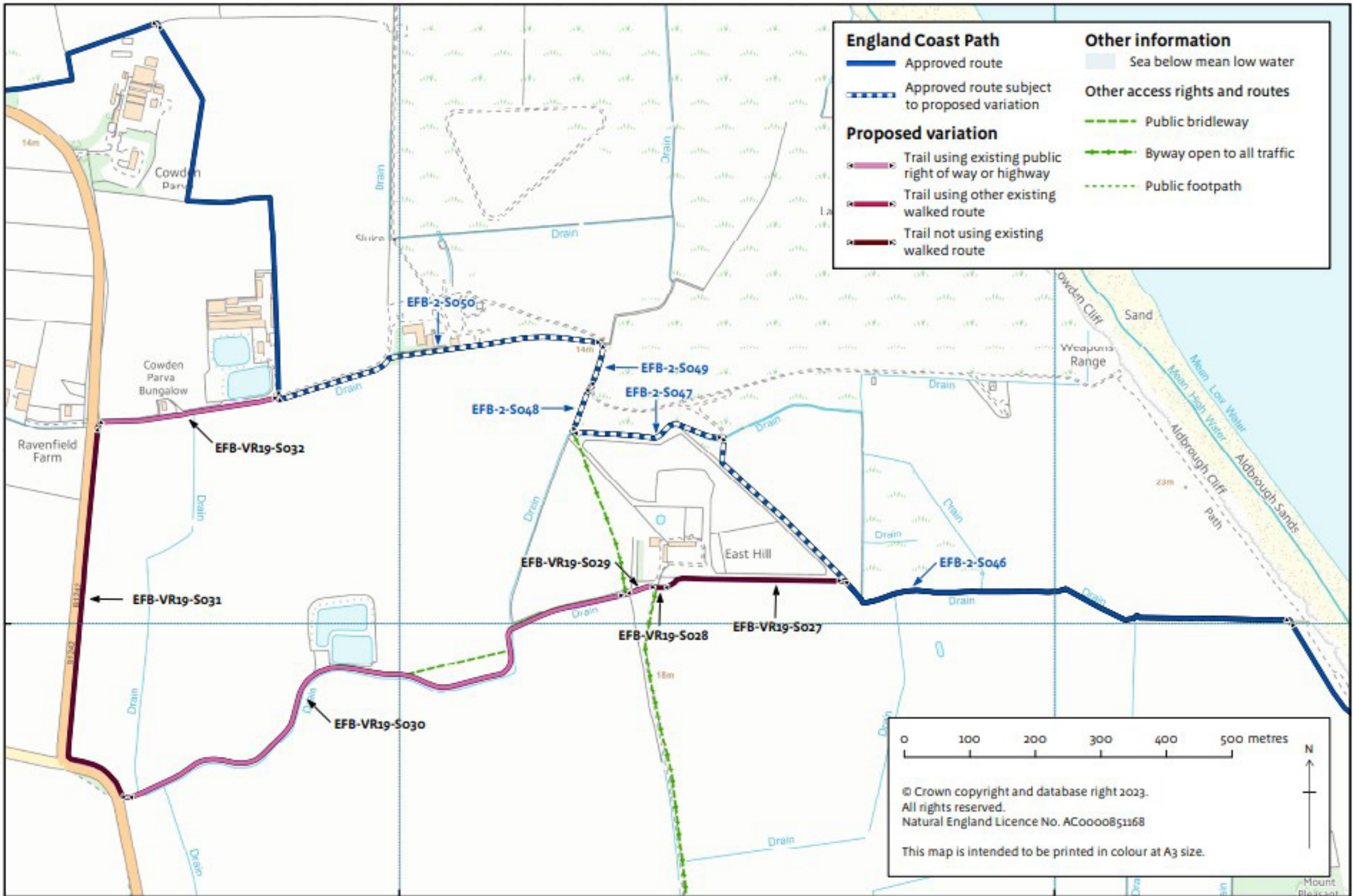
Table 2.3.1: Map VR19 – East Hill to Cowden Parva

Key notes on table:

1. 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.
2. Column 4 – ‘Yes – see table 2.2.1’ 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 in Annex B to the 2017 Overview) 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 8 of 2017 report Overview)	Landward margin contains coastal land type?	Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary proposal	Explanatory notes
VR19	EFB-VR19-S027	Not an existing walked route	Yes	No			
	EFB-VR19-S028	Not an existing walked route	Yes	No			
	EFB-VR19-S029	Byway	Yes	No			
	EFB-VR19-S030	Public Bridleway	Yes	No			
	EFB-VR19-S031	Not an existing walked route	Yes	No	Hedge	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 8 of 2017 report Overview)	Landward margin contains coastal land type?	Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary proposal	Explanatory notes
	EFB-VR19-S032	Other existing walked route	Yes	No			



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