Cleve Hill Solar Park

Feasibility Study

Client: Kent County Council / Quinbrook Infrastructure Partners

June 2023

About Sustrans

Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle.

We are engineers and educators, experts and advocates. We connect people and places, create liveable neighbourhoods, transform the school run and deliver a happier, healthier commute.

Sustrans works in partnership, bringing people together to find the right solutions. We make the case for walking and cycling by using robust evidence and showing what can be done.

We are grounded in communities and believe that grassroots support combined with political leadership drives real change, fast.

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1 Introduction

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the potential options for delivering a walking and cycling route that re-aligns National Cycle Network (NCN) route 1 through the proposed Cleve Hill Solar Park development site, between Faversham and Whitstable, Kent.

This report considers route options and outlines the benefits and constraints of each, along with landowner and ecological information.

The report will cover the following:

1. Introduction
   a. Background and context
   b. The Strategic case
2. Route option appraisal
3. Ecological review
4. Land ownership review
5. Preferred route alignment
6. Design considerations
7. Summary and next steps

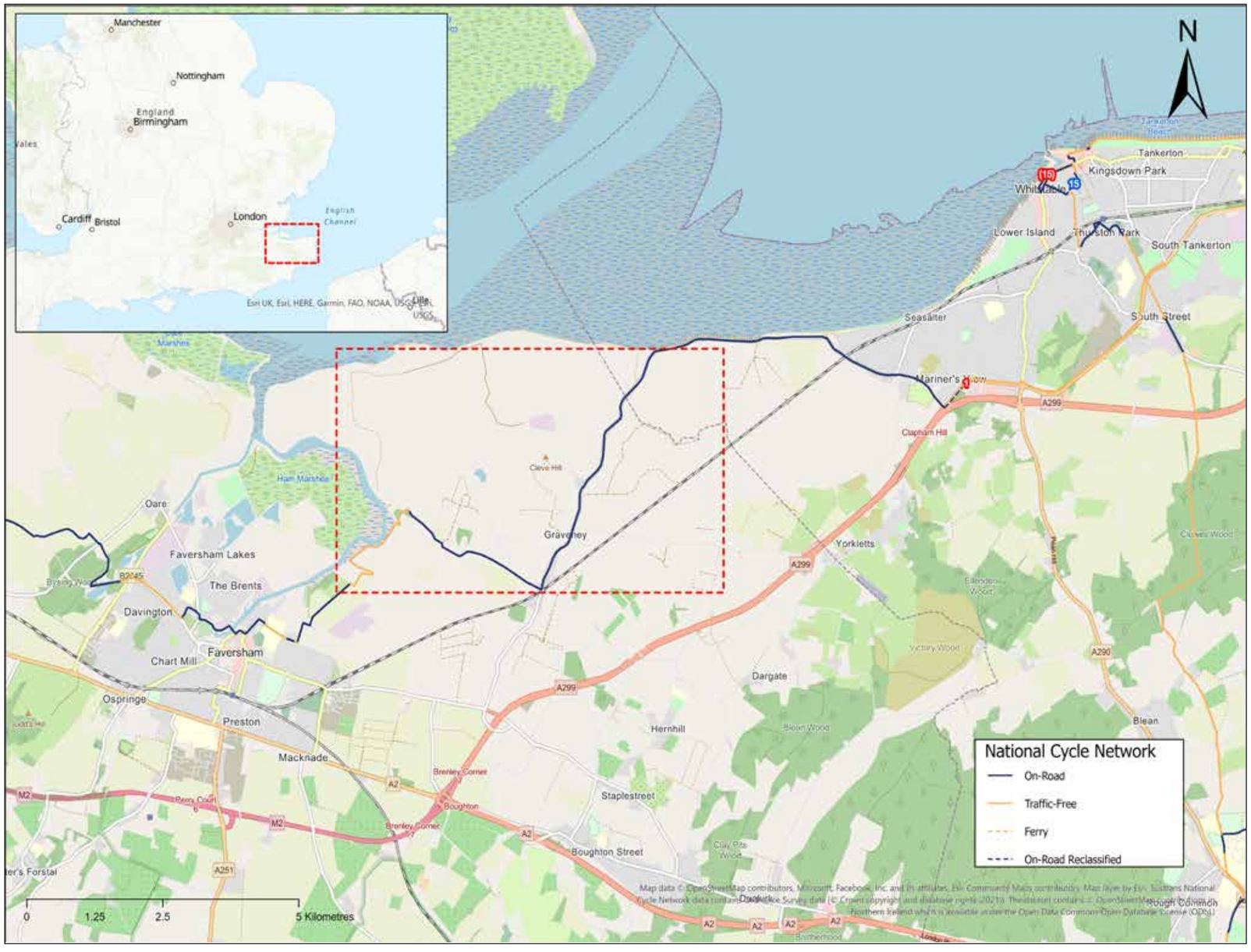


Figure 1.1 Study area: Cleve Hill Solar Park, Kent (Sustrans)

Background and context

Sustrans and the National Cycle Network

Sustrans are the custodians of the National Cycle Network (NCN): a UK-wide network of signed paths and routes for walking, cycling, wheeling and exploring the outdoors (Figure 1.2). The NCN not only promotes active travel, and helps to improve people's health and well-being, but it also provides large benefits to the UK economy.

From 2019 - 2020 an estimated:

- 4.2 million people used the Network
- 70.9 million car trips were saved by using the Network
- £1.64 billion was spent in local businesses through leisure and tourist users
- £21.5 million was saved by the National Health Service (NHS) through the Network's positive impact on health and well-being[1]

Our vision is a society where the way we travel creates healthier places and happier lives for everyone. We want the Network to:

- be wide enough for all users
- be cared for and well maintained
- have a smooth surface
- be clearly and consistently signed
- be fully accessible to everyone
- feel safe

Active Travel in the UK

In 2020, the UK government published *Gear Change: a bold visision for cycling and walking.*[2]The report outlines actions to be taken by all levels of government to transform England to a *great walking and cycling nation.* The report also identifies benefits to walking and cycling investments, such as:

- improving environmental and air quality
- combatting climate change through the reduction of transport emissions
- supporting employment and the economy
- supporting people's health and well-being

Cycling and walking will be the natural first choice for many journeys with half of all journeys in towns and cities being cycled or walked by 2030

- Department for Transport: Gear Change Report 2020

Figure 1.2 National Cycle Network (Sustrans)

1 See https://www.sustrans.org.uk/national-cycle-network

2 Department for Transport (2020) 'Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking.' https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf

The Strategic Case

Study area: Cleve Hill Solar Park

Cleve Hill Solar Park (CHSP) is an energy and solar storage area located one mile away from Faversham, Kent. Considering the magnitude of CHSP (having over 800,000 panels)[1] and its capacity exceeding 50 megawatts, it has been categorized as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP).[2] Consequently, planning for this included a Development Consent Order (DCO), as noted under the *Planning Act 2008.* The Solar Park has provoked some local controversy mostly because of its size, and its proximity to ecologically sensitive areas, such as the Swale Ramsar (an internationally significant wetland further discussed in *chapter 3*).[3] However, in May 2020, CHSP was granted approval.[2]

The Solar Park will include a solar array, electrical infrastructure, and a means of energy storage. Besides connecting to the national grid and helping to power homes across the United Kingdom, the project outlines potential benefits including: employment opportunities for the local communities, financial gains and investments to local authorities, and the use of the site for further research in clean energy[2]. CHSP is due for completion in 2024.

In response to the Solar Park plans, *The Solar Cycleway* campaign was established, comprising of local community members advocating for a *community corridor* through the area going from Faversham to Whitestable (Figure 1.3).[4] As described by Solar Cycleway in their proposal[5], the benefits of a route through the Solar Park include:

- connecting communities such as Seasalter and Faversham with a safe, off-road and fully accessible path inclusive of all users
- connecting people with the environment while promoting physical and mental well-being

An independent review of these routes has been included in this feasibility study.

1 Kent Online (2021) 'Cleve Hill...ownership.' https://www.kentonline.co.uk/faversham/news/uks-biggest-solar-farm-renamed-project-fortress-in-takeover-256171/
2 Cleve Hill Solar. https://www.clevehillsolar.com/
3 Kent WIldlife Trust. 'Cleve Hill Solar Park' https://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/campaigns/planning-and-development/cleve-hill-solar-park
4 The Solar Cycleway. https://www.solarcycleway.com/about-us
5 The Solar Cycleway. 'Faversham Community Corridor' https://www.solarcycleway.com/_files/ugd/907fe1_9123f6bb64af465392a5d2d3484136a3.pdf

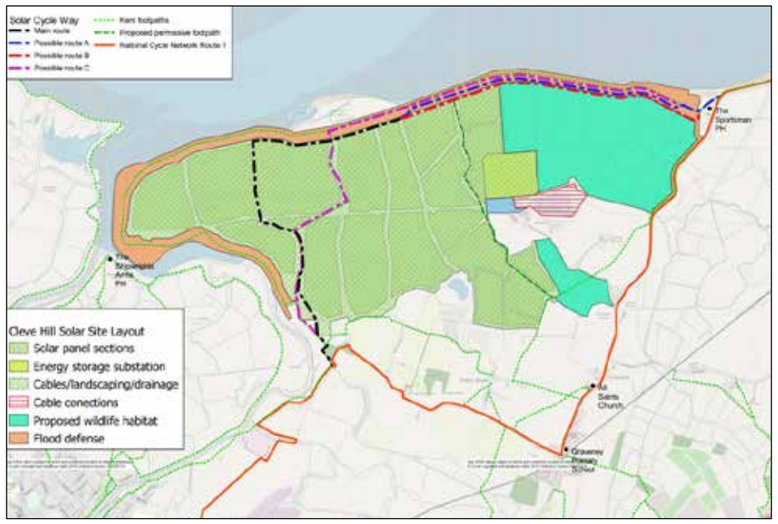


Figure 1.3 Solar Cycleway's proposed routes (Brian Jefferys, Solar Cycleway)

Stakeholder Engagement

In late 2022, the *Community Voice Group* was formed consisting of likeminded locals in the area who shared the same interest in ensuring that villages and communities benefited from the Cleve Hill Solar Park development. This was to compensate for the considerable impact that the development would have in the area.

Quinbrook has shown support for the Solar Cycleway, for example, by providing the funding for this feasibility study, commisioned by Kent County Council to provide an independent assessment of route options. Quinbrook aims to ensure that the community has input into any potential enhancements resulting from the Solar Park's development. While there is no governmental legislation that requires a developer to automatically give back to the community, Cleve Hill Solar Park and local residents will be neighbours for the next 40 years. Considering the effects of the development, it is understandable that Quinbrook would like to support the community.

Local Planning

This section considers and summarises main policies relating to active travel in the area, including those of Canterbury City Council and Swale Borough Council as Cleve Hill Solar Park spans within both local authorities.

Kent County Council

Active travel has been encouraged in this area. For example, in its *Active Travel Strategy (2017),* Kent County Council detailed its aims 'to make active travel an attractive and realistic choice for short journeys in Kent.' Kent is also to become a *pioneering county* for sustainable travel 'by developing and promoting accessible, safer and well-planned active travel opportunities.'[6] Furthermore, under its *Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock 2016-2031*[6], desired transport outcomes in Kent include the following:

- *Safer Travel*: *Provide a safer road, footway and cycleway network to reduce the likelihood of casualites, and encourage other transport providers to improve safety on their networks*
- *Better health and wellbeing: Provide and promote active travel choices for all members of the community to encourage good health and wellbeing, and implement measures to improve local air quality*

Kent County Council has also developed its *Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2018 - 2028*[7]*,* with their vision being 'to provide a high quality, well-maintained Public Rights of Way (PROW) network, that is well used and enjoyed.' Furthermore, 'the use of the network will support the Kent economy, encourage active lifestyles and sustainable travel choices that support health and wellbeing, and contribute to making Kent a great place to live, work and visit.' Some of its action plans include:

- *Work with developers to ensure active travel routes are incorporated and link to PROW / cycle networks, transport hubs and greenspaces*
- *Support and influence local authority strategies and policies to ensure that active travel is firmly integrated into development planning*
- *Provide motorised traffic free, safe walking, cycling and equestrian routes linking to towns, urban and rural areas*
- *Remove barriers to active travel and recreation and promote routes and opportunities*

6 Kent County Council (2017) 'Active Travel Strategy' https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/71773/Active-Travel-Strategy-information.pdf
7 Kent County Council 'Kent County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan' https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/90491/Rights-of-Way-Improvement-Plan-2018-2028.pdf

Swale Borough Council

In 2021, Swale Borough Council published its draft *Transport Strategy 2022 - 2037,* with the vision to 'deliver a sustainable transport network in Swale that creates an attractive, green and vibrant borough.' Furthermore, 'the transport strategy will enable and encourage people to travel sustainably and actively, nurture healthy lifestyles, create less polluted places and upgrade the transport network to meet the borough's needs.'[1] Within this strategy, one of its objectives is 'to promote active and sustainable travel enabling residents to take up these modes.' The following are some actions listed to reach this objective:

- *Provide safe, pleasant and direct walking and cycling routes*
- *Pedestrian and cyclist priority*
- *20mph zones*
- *Provide safer walking routes to schools including the investigation for school streets*
- *Focus routes in town centers, rural locations, as well as linkages for public transport, amenities and leisure needs*
- *Routes should join together in a cohesive manner*

As a part of its cycling infrastructure improvements, 'priority will be given to the main urban areas and links to surrounding settlements which generate significant amounts of commuting.'[4] Faversham has been included as one of these key areas.

Canterbury City Council

In the *Canterbury District Transport Strategy 2014-31*, a joint document of Kent County Council and Canterbury City Council, the ovarall theme is 'to improve access to services, goods and opportunities and tackle the negative impacts of traffic by promoting sustainable modes of transport, achieving reliable vehicle journey times and supporting sustainable development.'[2] One of the main objectives is to 'encourage the use of alternative modes of transport as an alternative to the private car.' [2] The following general actions, which relate to walking and cycling, have been highlighted:

- *New walking and cycling routes*
- *Safer cycling initiatives*
- *New 20mph zones*

Specifically, its walking policy (*policy 5.1*) states, 'we will encourage walking by providing a safe, direct and pleasant walking experience and supporting walking initiatives.' [2] This will include the creation of new walking links and footways, improving the Public Rights of Way (PROW) network, and generally considering the needs of pedestrians in all planned transport developments.

Policy 5.2 states, 'we will encourage cycling as an alternative to the private car for local journeys through a comprehensive network of cycle friendly routes and cycle related improvements.'[2] Although some off-road routes may be identified, the key aim is to ensure cycling facilities on the main routes.

In addition to this strategy, public feedback regarding a draft *Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan* for Canterbury was gathered in late 2022. This details the desire to switch to active means of travel. It includes policies to achieve this, and proposed routes that correlate to existing routes, future developments and main destinations. Feedback will be reviewed by councillors in 2023 before plans are established.[3]

Faversham: Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) (2022)

In 2017, the UK Government published its *Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (The Strategy)*, outlining the desire to make cycling and walking more primary choices for shorter journeys, and to better include them in longer journeys.[4] As a part of this, Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) have been introduced as as way to help Local Authorites (LAs) with developing long term plans in developing and/or improving walking and cycling at the local level.[4] Faversham is one of the closest communities to the Cleve Hill Solar Park site (Figure 1.1). Previous studies suggest that majority of the town is within a 20 minute walk from the town centre, with limited cycling infrastructure.[5] Its LCWIP recommends cycling and walking routes, with majority of them overlapping (table 1). This is relevant as National Cycle Network (NCN) 1 also goes into Faversham.

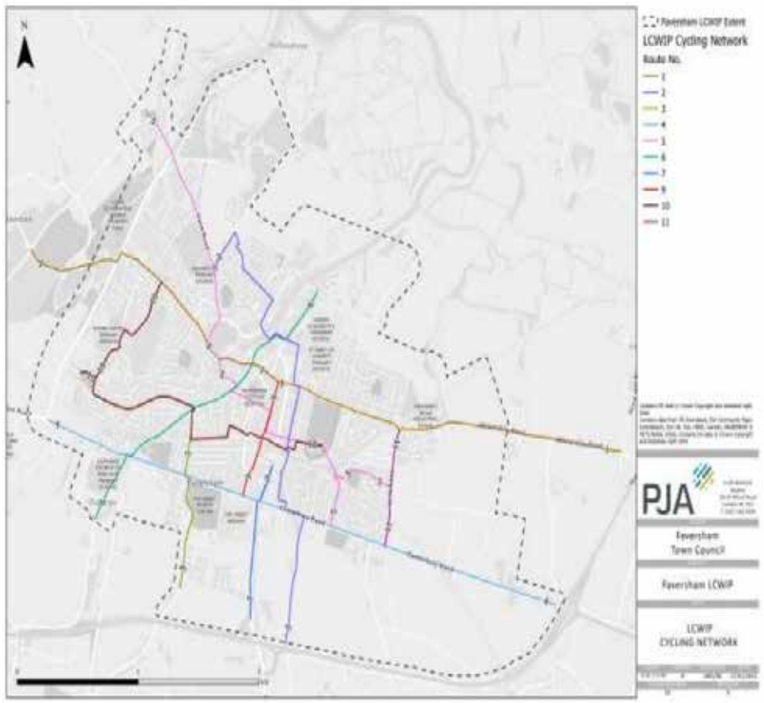


Figure 1.4 Faversham LCWIP: Recommended cycling network (PJA)

1 Alice Stewart-Cox (2021) 'Swale Borough Council Transport Strategy 2022 - 2037' https://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/documents/s16438/Appendix%20III%20Swale%20Transport%20Strategy%202022-2037.pdf

2 Kent County Council and Canterbury City Council 'Canterbury District Transport Strategy 2014-31'https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/78135/Canterbury-District-Transport-2014-2031.pdf

3 Canterbury Newsroom (2022) 'Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan' https://news.canterbury.gov.uk/consultations/cycling-and-walking-implementation-plan/

4 Department for Transport (2017) 'Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans: TechnicalGuidance for Local Authorities' https:// assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908535/cycling-walking-infrastructure-technical-guiance-document.pdf

5 PJA (2022) 'Faversham Town Council Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan' https://favershamtowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Faversham-LCWIP-for-approval-Feb-22-Lo-Res.pdf

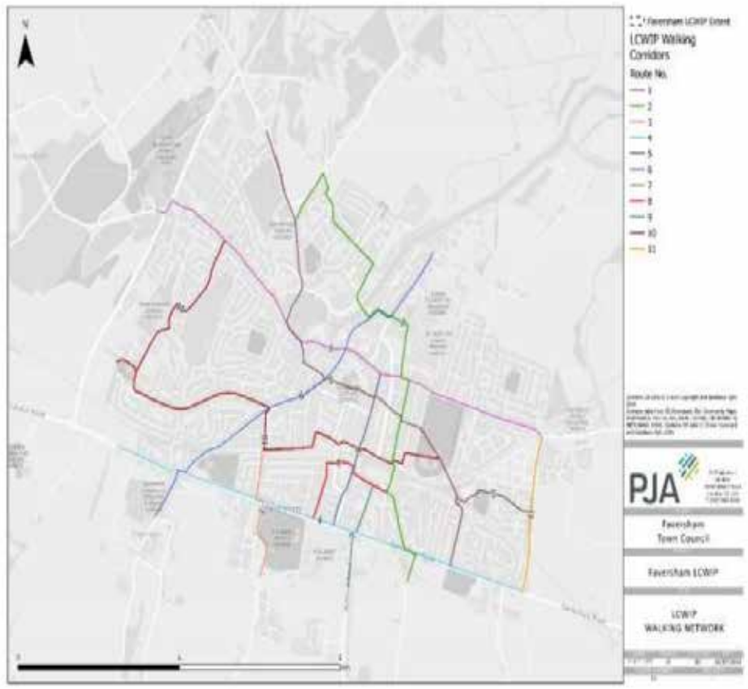


Figure 1.5 Faversham LCWIP: Recommended walking route network (PJA)

Table 1: Faversham LCWIP: Recommended routes (Modified from PJA) [5]

Faversham LCWIP: Recommended cycling and walking routes			
Cycling Route		**Walking Routes**	
Route 1	Bysing Wood Road - Dark Hill - West Street - Market Street (alternative via Partridge Lane/ Court Street/Crescent Road)	Route 1	Bysing Wood Road - Dark Hill - West Street - Whistable Road
Route 2	Ham Road - Broomfield Road - Conduit Street-Bridge Road - St.Mary's Road - St.Catherine's Drive	Route 2	Ham Road - Broomfield Road - Conduit Street - Bridge Road - St.Mary's Road - Preston Lane
Route 3	Brogdale Road - Upper St. Ann's Road	Route 3	Brogdale Road - Upper St. Ann's Road
Route 4	Watling Street (A2)	Route 4	Watling Street
Route 5	Oare Road - Napleton Road - Stone Street - Preston Street - Solomons Lane (alternative via Station Road/Beaumont Terrace/ St. John's Road) - Chapel Street - Long Bridge - Preston Avenue	Route 5	Oare Road - Napleton Road - Stone Street - Preston Street - Chapel Street - Long Bridge - Preston Avenue
Route 6	Water Lane - South Road - Abbey Street	Route 6	Water Lane - South Road - Abbey Street
Route 7*	Ashford Road - Preston Grove	Route 7	Ashford Road - Preston Grove
Route 9*	The Mall - Railway Underpass (alternative via Forbes Road) - Preston Street	Route 8	Kingsnorth Road - Athelstan Road
Route 10	Wildish Road - Lower Road - St. Ann's Road - School Road - Briton Road	Route 9	The Mall - Preston Street
Route 11	Love Lane	Route 10	Wildish Road - Lower Road - St. Ann's Road - School Road - Briton Road
		Route 11	Love Lane

* Route 8 is omitted from Faversham LCWIP

Existing route and local context

As shown, the study area is to the west of National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 1 (Figure 1.8). This route helps in connecting neighbouring communities such as Graveney, Faversham, and Whitstable. However, the majority of NCN 1 in this area, from Mariner's View in the east towards Faversham in the west, is on road. In Faversham itself, only small sections of the NCN are traffic free.

More specifically, when looking at the eastern side of the Solar Park, NCN 1 goes along Seasalter Road and Faversham Road, which have no separated provisions for pedestrian, wheelchair, and other non-motorised users/wheelers (Figure 1.7)**.** Users of the NCN must share the already narrow road with vehicles. This could get more dangerous due to potential increases in construction traffic flow while the Solar Park is under development. Considering the proximity of nearby communities, and the need to access local schools, amenities and services amongst them, road safety has been a recurring theme in existing literature published for the area. For example, in the *Parishes to Town: Active Travel Project, stage 1 report*[1]*,* which focuses on linkages between Faversham and nearby communities, the following findings were highlighted by stakeholders:

- *"NCN1 goes through Graveney, but is deemed dangerous along Seasalter Road"*
- consideration for NCN 1 to be re-routed

Following independent UK-wide audits of the National Cycle Network [2], Sustrans has indeed categorised the existing on-road NCN 1 surrounding the Solar Park area as *very poor* (Figure 1.8). Furthermore, Sustrans uses a scoring tool for quantifying traffic volume on each section of the NCN, whereby Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) corresponds to an INRIX traffic flow value. The INRIX traffic flow for each section of the NCN ranges from 1 - 16, with 1 referring to low vehicle flow. Sustrans data has given Seasalter Road an INRIX volume max score of 12, with an INRIX volume mean score of 10. These numbers suggest median AADT levels ranging from 1900 to 3600 along the road.

According to Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20, which serves as guidance by the Department for Transport (DfT) for cycle infrastructure,a fully kerbed cycle track is recommended under any motor traffic flow for roads with speeds limits greater than 30mph in order for conditions to be suitable for most users (Figure 1.6) [3]. Considering that Seasalter Road is national speed limit (60mph), light or stepped segregation or mixed traffic conditions would be inappropriate and the development of fully kerbed provisions would be subject to private landownership constraints along the road. Furthermore, limited parallel roads running South to connect to NCN 1 suggest that there is no alternative on-road alignment. Instead, re-routing NCN 1 through the Solar Park would help to create a safer and more direct route that avoids heavy vehicle flow, thus potentially attracting more diverse users such as children, the elderly, and disabled persons. This would increase the overall accessibility of NCN1 in this area, adhering to DfT and Sustrans' guidance. This would also further support active travel in the area, which has been promoted by local authorities such as Kent County Council and Faversham Town Council (examples of active travel initiatives explained above).

Once managed properly, re-routing NCN 1 through the Solar Park would also give users better access to natural attractions, such as Graveney Marshes, which is rich in wildlife including Brent geese and marsh harriers. Having the opportunity to experience these outdoor areas would not only contribute to physical and mental well-being but could also give people a greater appreciation for their surrounding natural environments.

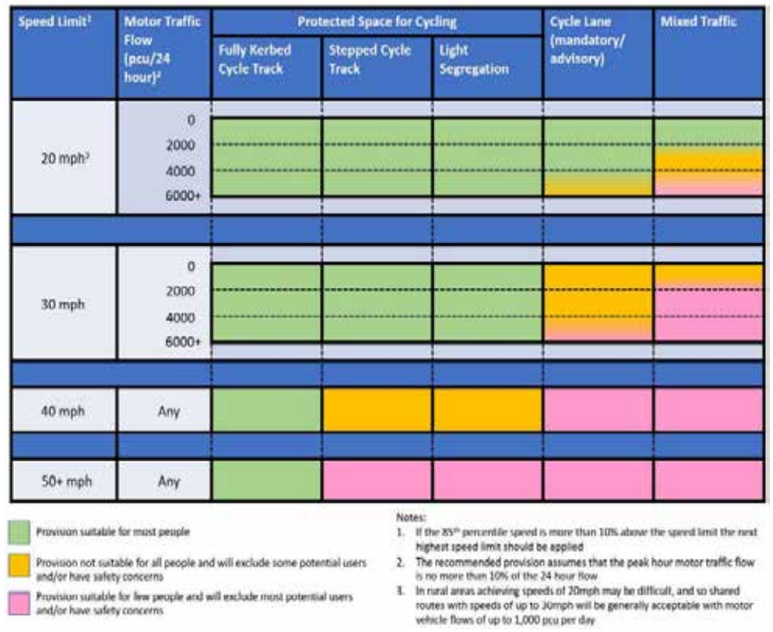


Figure 1.6 Appropriate protection from motor traffic on highways (LTN 1/20)

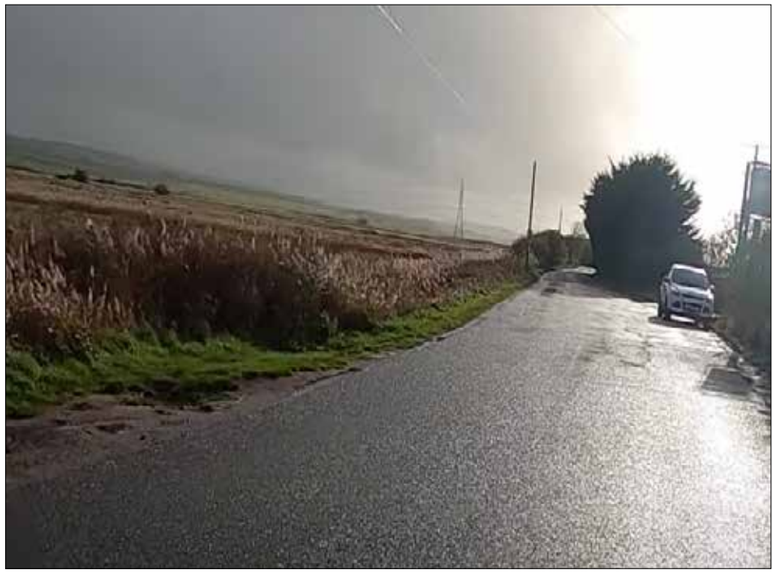


Figure 1.7 Existing conditions along Faversham Road where there are no dedicated cycling or walking facilities

1 Berendt Consulting Ltd 'Parishes to Town: Active Travel Project Stage 1 report' https://favershamtowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Report-back-to-Parishes-Stage-1-April-22.pdf

2 See 'Paths for Everyone' Report (p. 15) for breakdown of NCN classification. https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/2804/paths_for_everyone_ncn_review_report_2018.pdf

3 Department for Transport (2020) 'Cycle Infrastructure Design' https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/951074/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-1-20.pdf

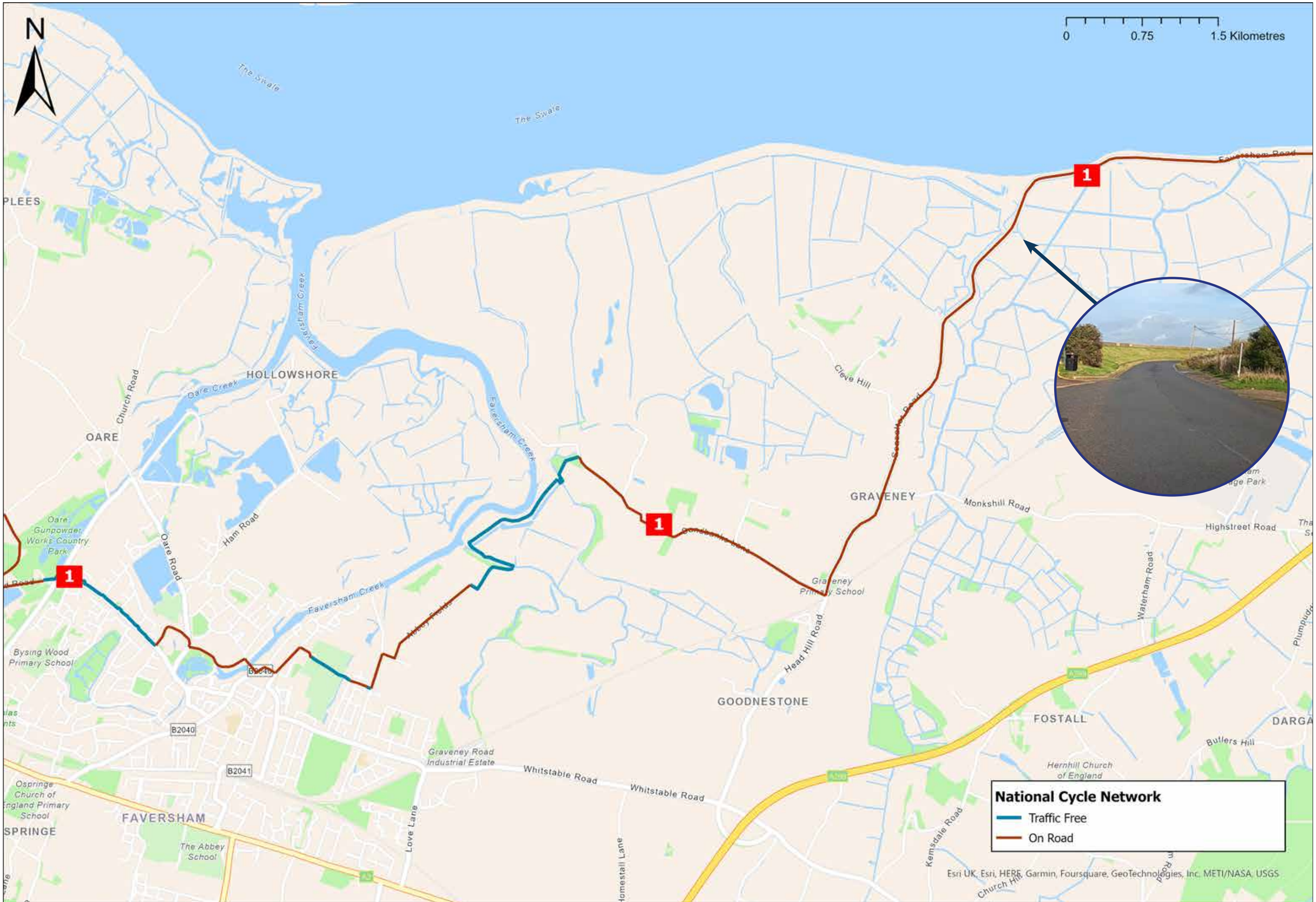


Figure 1.8 Location of the study area in relation to National Cycle Network Route 1

Public Rights of Way (PROW) Network

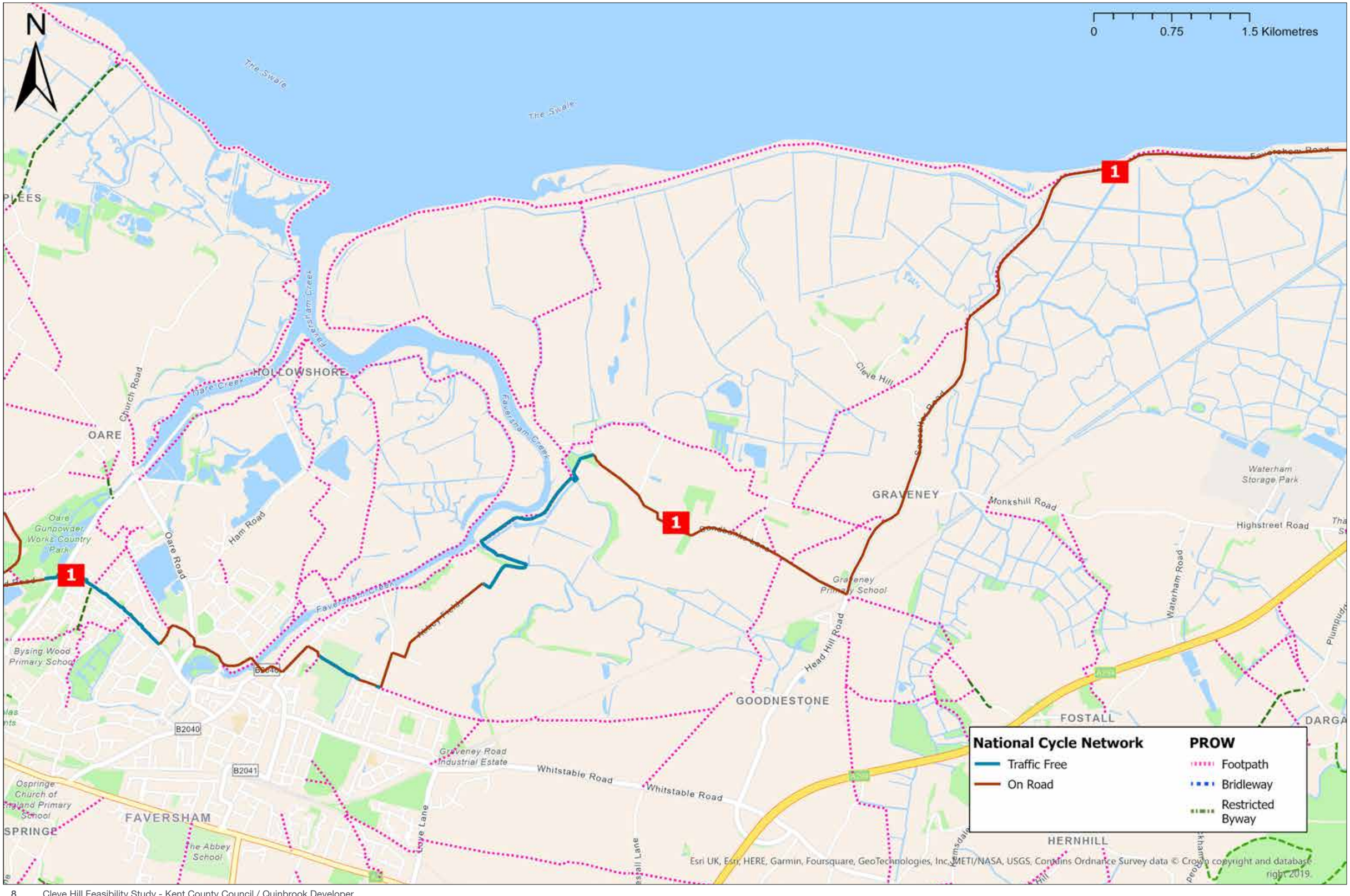


Figure 1.9 Existing PROW network within the study area

2 Route Option Appraisal

Overview

This report considers options for re-routing National Cycle Network (NCN) 1 through the Cleve Hill Solar Park site, which would promote a new traffic-free section of the route. Proposed route options were idenfitied by the Solar Cycleway Campaign Group and local community, Kent County Council, Sustrans, and the Cleve Hill Solar Park Developer. All options lend themselves to walking, however, cycling, wheeling and disabled use will require smooth surfaced tracks and sufficient path width.

This chapter presents an overview of each route including background information, existing conditions, key benefits and constraints.

Option A

Option B

Option C

Option D

Option E

Option F

Figure 2.1 Route options within the Cleve Hill Solar Park area

Route A

Route Overview

From NCN 1 and Faversham Road, Option A follows an undefined alignment westward on the south side of the main dyke to Castle Coote Bird Sanctuary where it turns south along Public Rights of Way (PROW) footpath ZR485. This route was cited as the local community's preferred route alignment. Option A crosses over private land so for the purposes of this report, it could only be viewed from a distance due to locked gates preventing access to inspect on the ground.

The route passes by 'The Sportsman' pub and a car park at the eastern end, and some houses at the southern end, which may help to provide natural surveillance. Overall, the route is mostly undeveloped and is primarily comprised of mud and grass, and thus, would require path construction works, and improvements to wayfinding. Following a desktop ecological appriasal, this route was also deemed to have a high ecological risk, which will further be discussed in Chapter 3. This route is approximately 5km in length.

Route Benefits

- Permission to use certain sections, for example the north-eastern section, is in the gift of the Solar Array Developer and its partners, which may help to lower landownership constraints
- It is the preferred alignment of the local campaign group

Route Constraints

- The entire length of the route is currently not open to public access
- Very high ecological risk
- Route lighting may not be acceptable to wildlife groups or planners
- Landowner consent required to use the southern section of the route
- Wet ground along the route due to proximity to the dyke

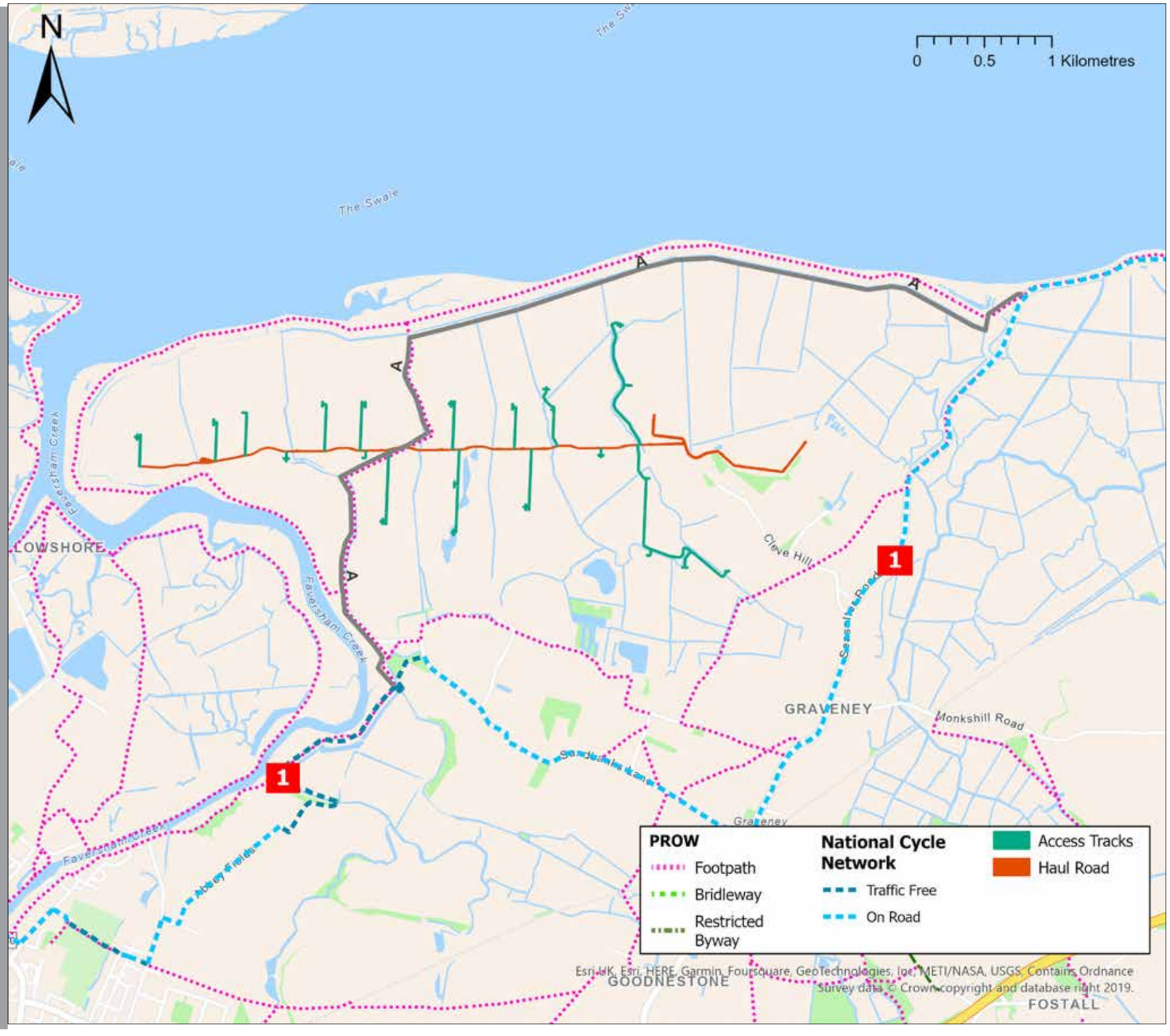


Figure 2.2 Option A route alignment

Option A

1

- Houses near the north-eastern end of the route which may help to provide natural surveillance

2

- Rough alignment of route A, south of the main dyke
- Existing poor surfaces would require improvements

3

- The route would require complete development works to be accessible to all users

4

- The PROW path running south may be sufficient for walkers, but improvements would need to be made to allow for those in wheelchairs and other non-standard vehicles

Route B

Route Overview

Starting from the north-eastern side of the Cleve Hill Solar Park area, Route B leaves NCN 1 from Faversham Road and continues west in the toe of the flood defence bund. It joins Option A at the end of the dyke where the ground widens east of the Bird Sanctuary before heading south along the PRoW path ZR485 (Figure 2.3). It then continues southwards down the PROW, following the same alignment as option A, where it eventually meets NCN 1. Considering that it has the same starting point as Route A, Route B also has natural surveillance from nearby houses, 'The Sportsman' and the car park on the eastern side.This option has a grass surface along the toe of the flood defence, hence it would also require path construction works.

Natural England holds freehold title for 500m east of The Sportsman on Faversham Road and would also be a statutory consultee for any proposed planning application. The Kent Wildlife Trust holds freehold title for the remaining 2,900m eastward beside the Swale flood defence bund and would also be a statutory consultee for any proposed planning application. This route is approximately 5km in length.

Route Benefits

- Sustrans has succesfully created paths in similar contexts, i.e. in the toe of an Environment Agency flood defence. One example is the Egrets Way in East Sussex: a 12km traffic free path in the toe of the flood defence between Lewes and Newhaven, beside the River Ouse, currently nearing completion.
- Almost identical alignment to preferred community alignment option A

Route Constraints

- High ecological risk
- Much of the route is undeveloped so would require path surfacing works
- Route lighting may not be acceptable to wildlife groups or planners
- Landowner and Environment Agency consent required

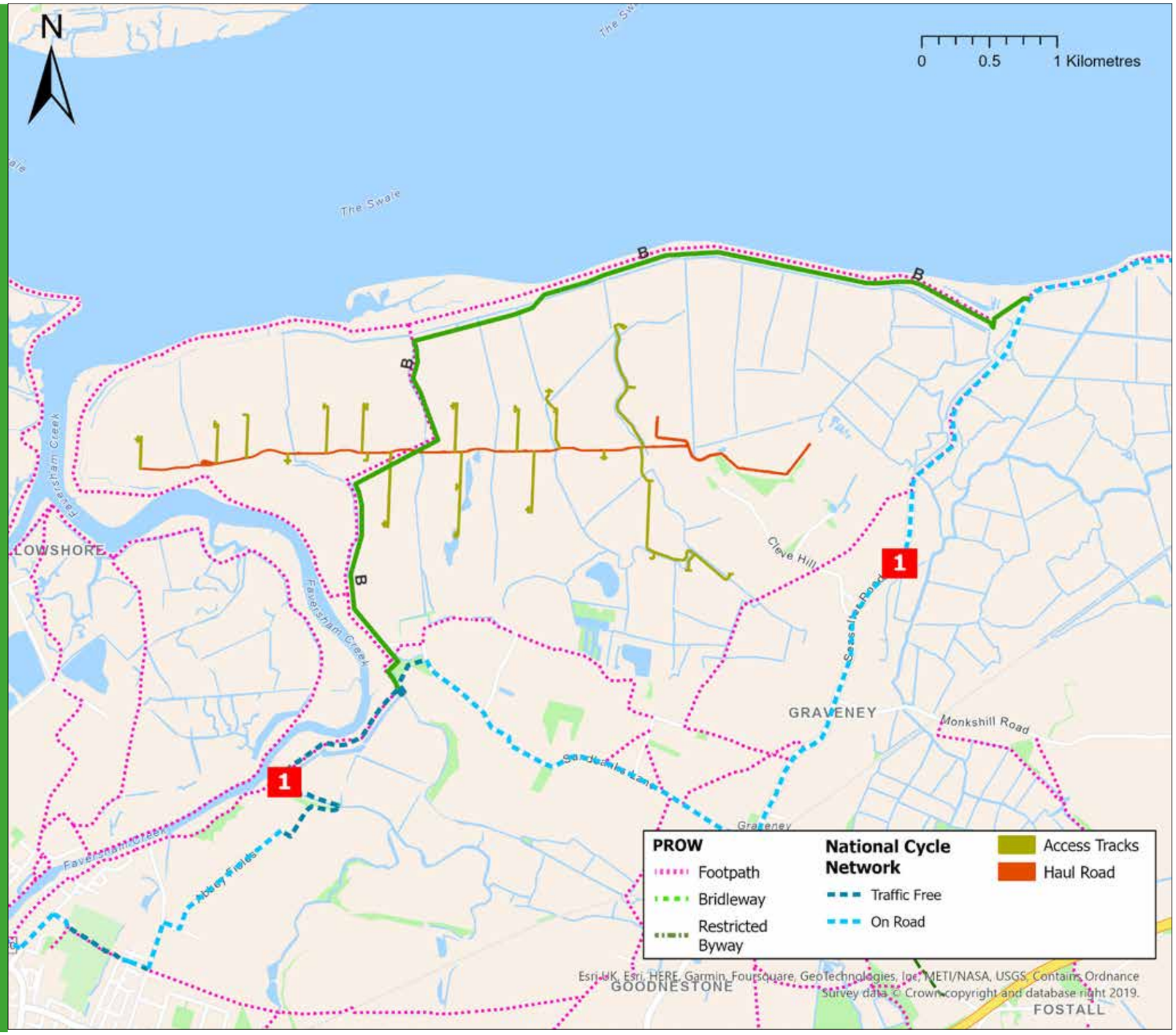


Figure 2.3 Option B route alignment

Option B

1

- Route follows the toe of the flood defence mound
- Majority of the route, particularly the section running east-west, is undeveloped and would require complete surfacing works to be accessible to all users

2

- Route becomes more isolated as one moves westwards, away from Faversham Road. Users may feel less safe using the path therefore lighting improvements may be required

3

- Route continues to feel isolated as one moves southwards

4

- The southern section following the PROW may currently be fit for walkers, but would require surfacing works to be acceptable for wheelchair users, prams, etc.

Route C

Route Overview

Starting from the north-eastern side of the Cleve Hill Solar Park area, this route leaves NCN 1 from Faversham Road and avoids Seasalter Road by also moving west-wards through the site (Figure 2.4). It then makes a 90 degrees turn moving southwards, following the same alignment as options A and B. This route follows the existing PRoW path throughout its entire length, and takes users along the top of the flood defence bund. Although this route provides excellent natural scenery, allowing for an attractive space for users, it is also high in ecological risks which is further detailed in Chapter 3. In total, this route covers approximately 5 km from Faversham Road to NCN 1 in the South.

Route Benefits

• The best user experience is enjoyed from the top of the flood defence bund where panoramic views over The Swale Estuary and Whitstable Bay can be enjoyed

Route Constraints

- High ecological risk
- Much of the route is undeveloped so would require path surfacing works
- Route lighting may not be acceptable to wildlife groups or planners
- Landowner and Environment Agency consent required; we anticipate that the EA may resist cycling provision on top of the flood defence

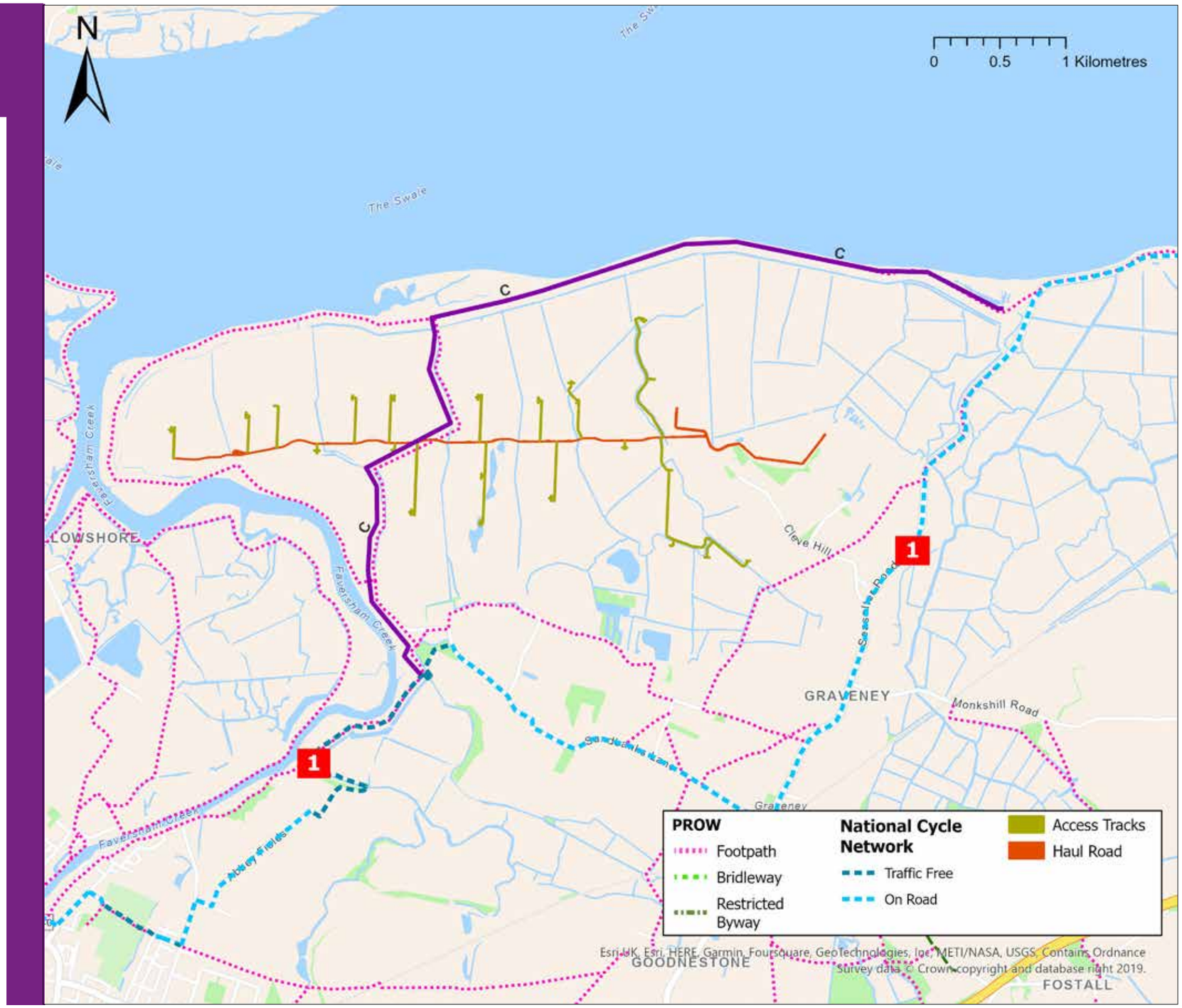


Figure 2.4 Option C route alignment

Option C

1

- The length of the route is traffic free, but there is the possibility of traffic coming from the north-eastern end of the route where there is already a road and nearby houses

2

- Route follows the top of the flood defence mound and the PROW
- Considering the slopes on both sides of the mound, there is concern over user safety. Along with re-surfacing to improve route comfort, a ramp structure would need to be constructed to promote user accessibility

3

- Resurfacing works would be required throughout the entire length of the route, along the PROW path

4

- The route also becomes more isolating as one moves westwards which may leave users feeling unsafe

Route D

Route Overview

This route alignment follows an existing metalled permissive path over private land. It starts at the western section of routes A, B and C, but instead of moving southwards, it heads west, forming a small loop (Figure 2.5). It then continues down and eventually joins the PROW path south of the existing Cleve Hill haul road. Considering that the route takes users along a loop instead of following the PROW southwards, it is deemed to be not very direct. In total the route covers approximately 1.4km.

Route Benefits

- Existing surfaced track used by local walkers and cyclists

Route Constraints

- Not designated as a Public Right of Way
- Indirect route
- Isolated location
- Currently, it is an access route for Kent Wildlife Trust

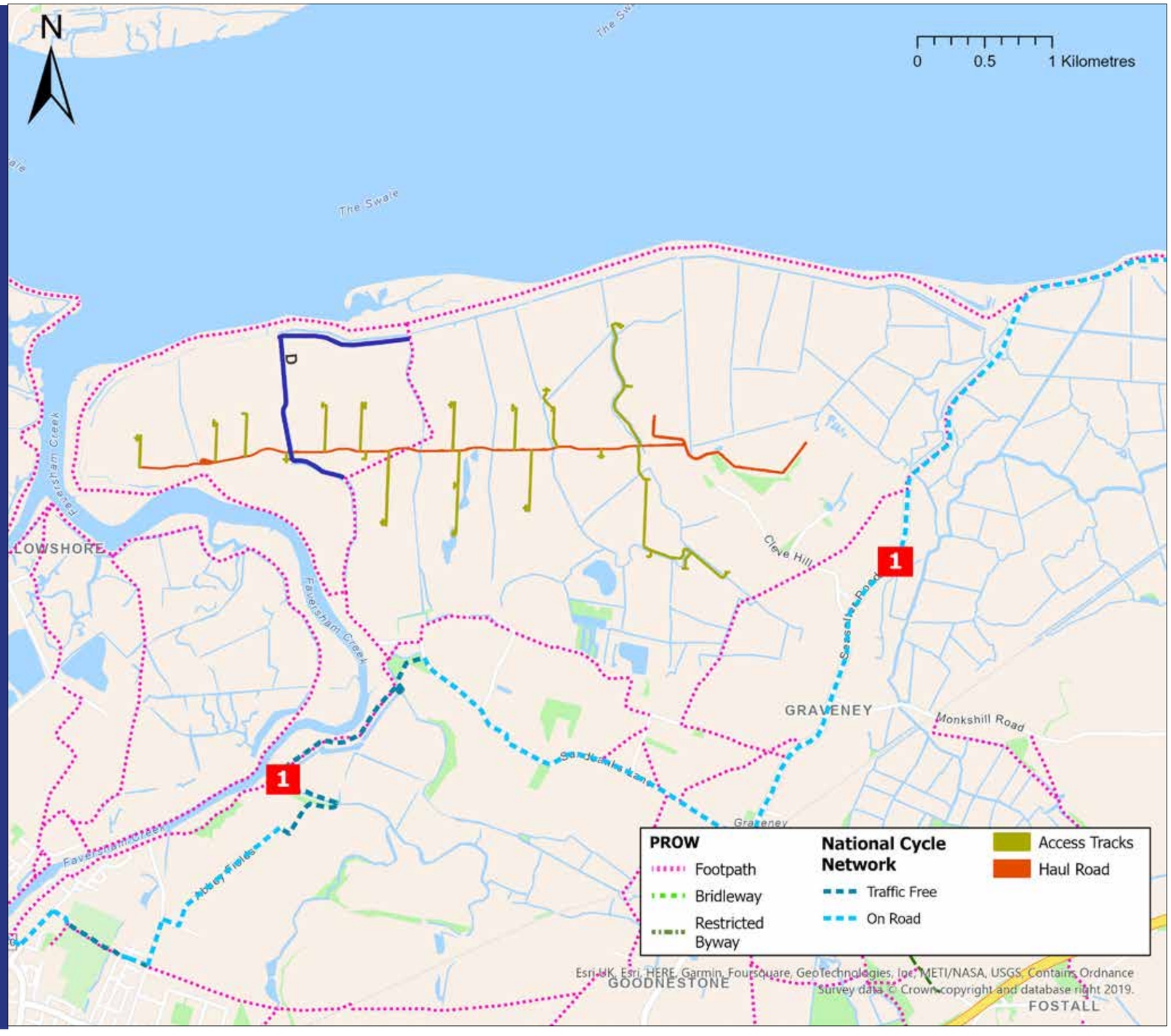


Figure 2.5 Option D route alignment

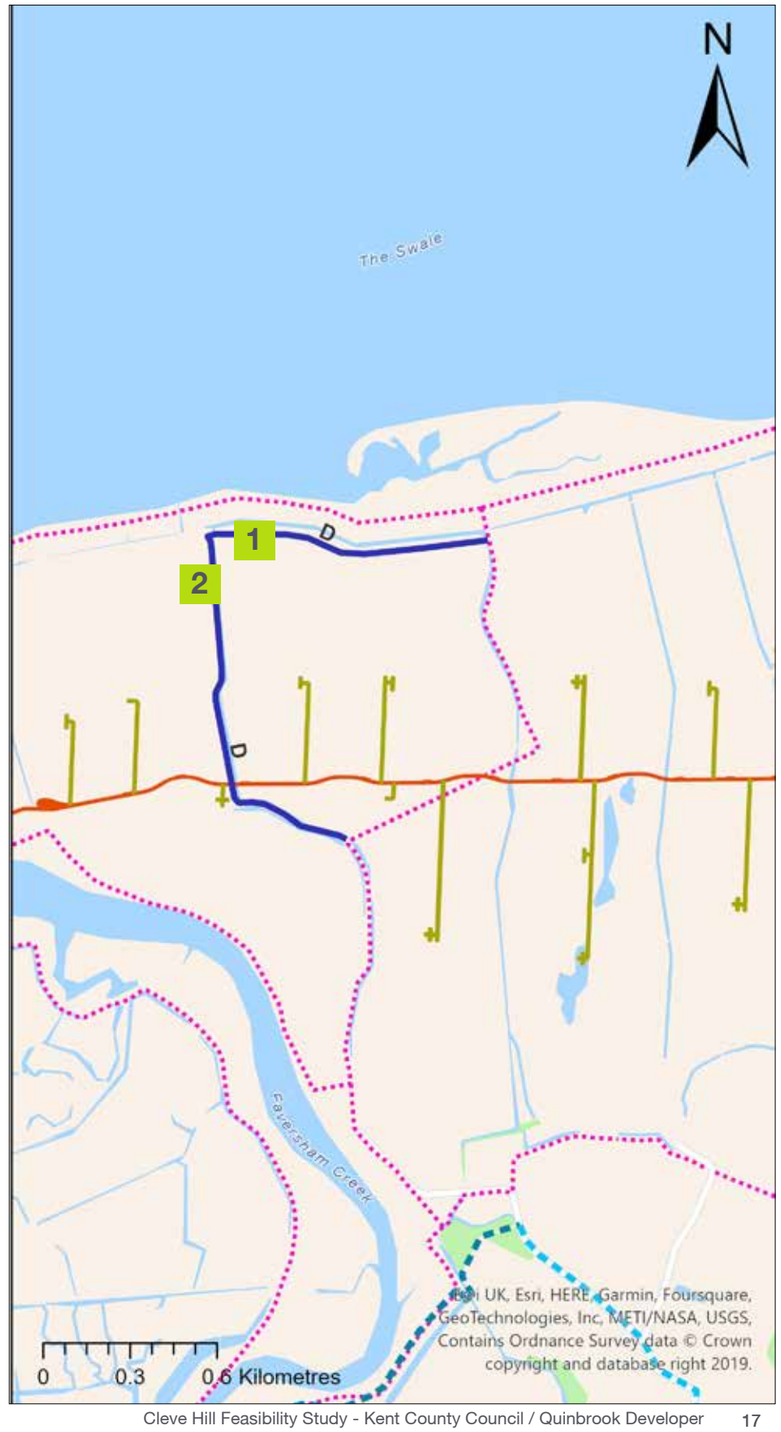
Option D

1

- Eastern view of route D which follows an existing path that would require some resurfacing works to be accessible for all users
- Route may also feel isolated to users and would need improvements to lighting

2

- Southern view of route D along the existing path
- Permission would be needed to develop this path, particularly from Kent Wildlife Trust



Route E

Route Overview

The route follows the new Solar Park haul road alignment currently under construction to provide material access to the site. This alignment passes westward from Seasalter Road through the centre of the Cleve Hill Solar Park installation site before turning south to follow the existing PROW to NCN 1 (Figure 2.6). This route is approximately 5 km in length.

Route Benefits

- The route utilises a new east-west quality surfaced road installation with anticipated low traffic movements post construction.
- Consent to use the haul road section is in the gift of the developers
- Lower ecological impact than other route options

Route Constraints

- Landowner consent will be required, particularly for the southern section
- The north eastern part of the route follows Faversham Road, therefore it is not completely traffic free
- Potential challenges regarding security of solar park infrastructure
- Not as attractive to leisure users compared to other routes assessed in this report
- The current surface condition of the southerly PROW section to NCN 1 will require potential surface upgrades to provide a fully accessible route
- Ecology mitigation opportunities may still present a challenge

Figure 2.6 Option E route alignment

Option E

1

- Existing haul road section under construction. This prevents the development of an entirely new route, lowering total construction cost for the re-routing of NCN 1

2

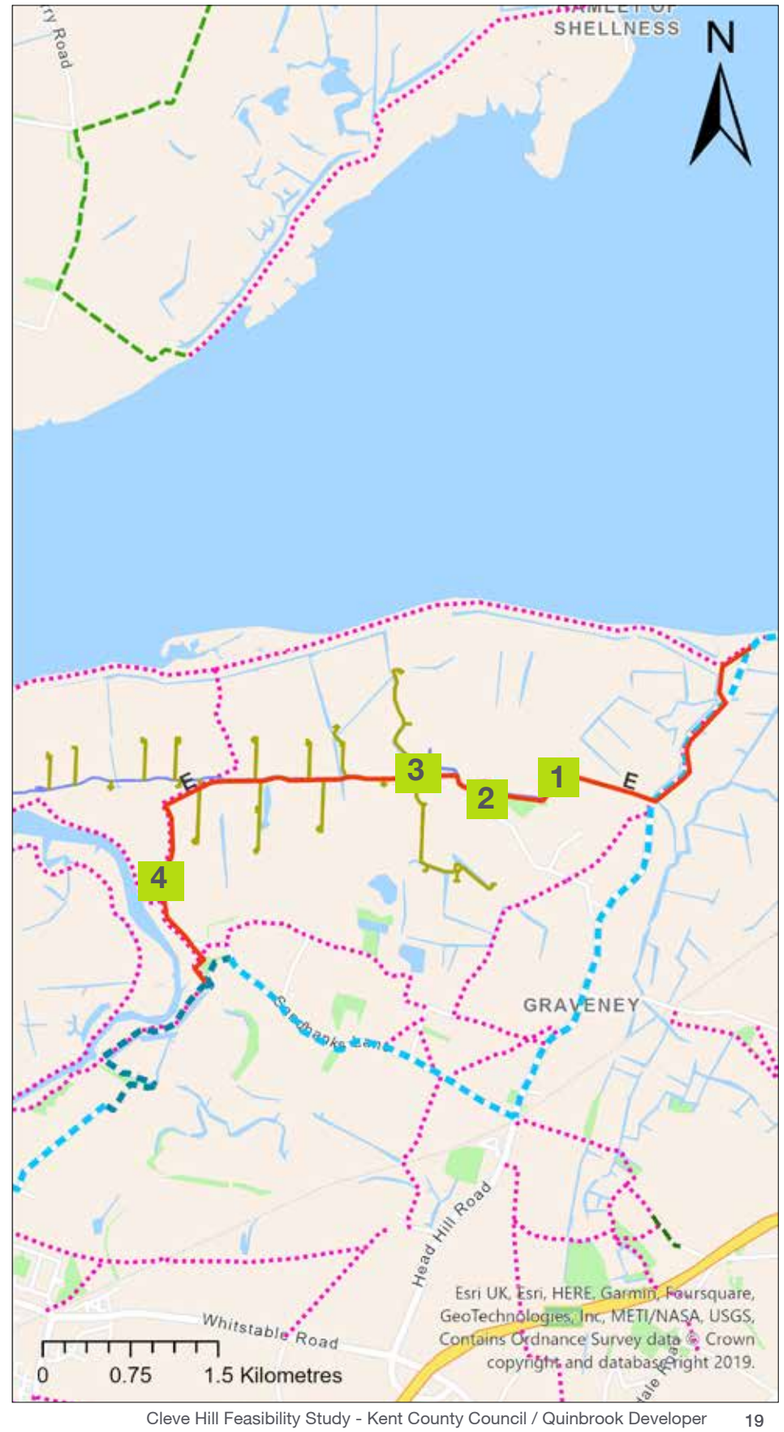
- This would provide a newly constructed, well surfaced path with sufficient width requirements to be accessible for all users

3

- Western view from the haul road, yet to be constructed

4

- The southern section, following the PROW would still need surfacing improvements



Route F

Route Overview

This is a new permissive route alignment being implemented as part of the Development Consent Order (DCO) approval. It is a concession from the Solar Park developers being utilised for ecology mitigation measures. It links coastal route alignment options A, B and C to option E, and to Cleve Hill further south. This route covers 1.9km.

Route Benefits

- Provides circular route opportunities, particularly for walkers and ramblers.
- Sections of the route have sufficient widths, and follow a newly constructed path
- Provides a link from the coast, to the bottom of the Cleve Hill site, allowing for entrance and exit from the southern PROW path

Route Constraints

- Currently only a north - south alignment through the centre of the Solar Park development, and would not provide an alternative routing for NCN 1
- Permissive route status only
- Sections along the route are grass only, and would require resurfacing works

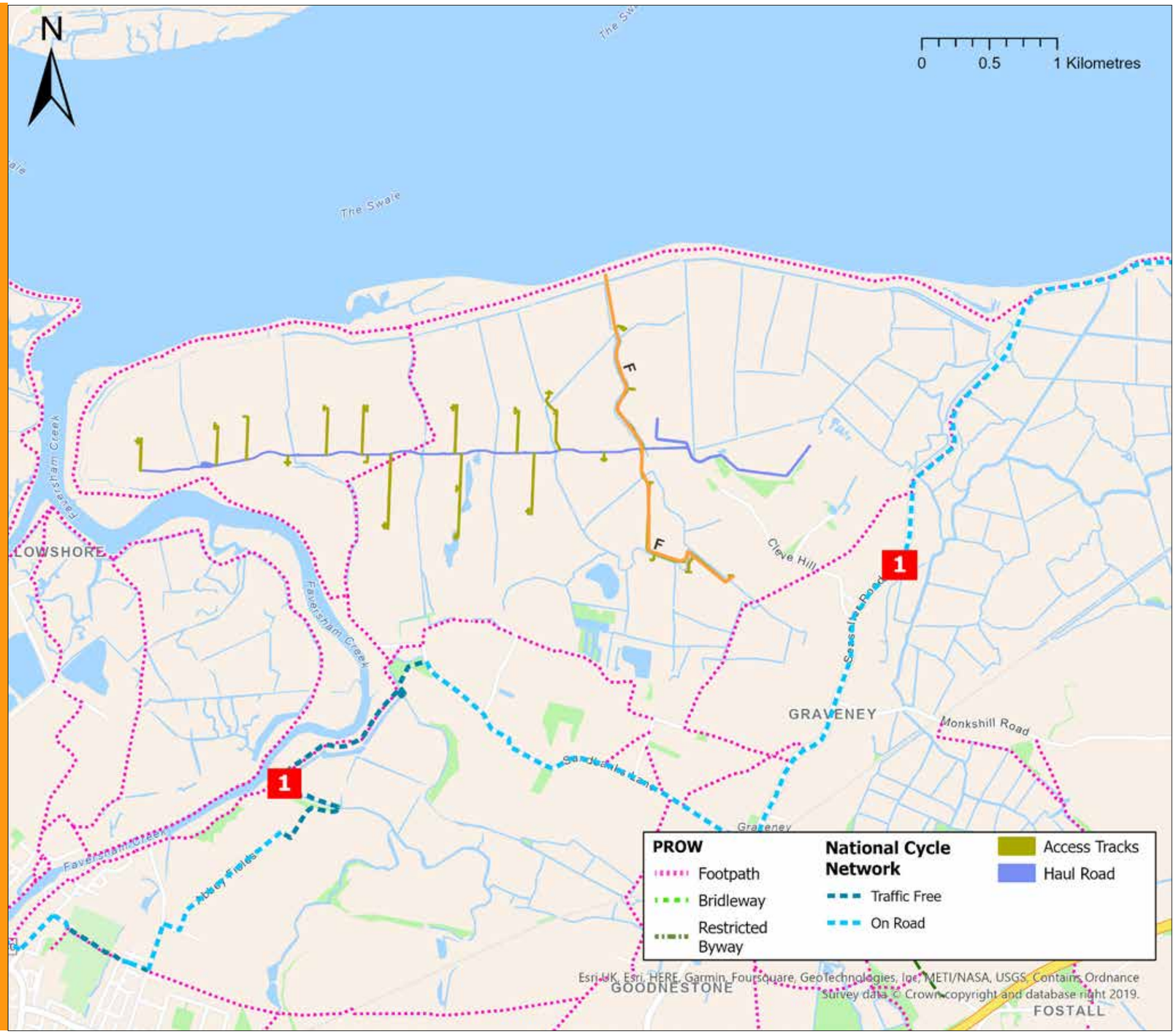


Figure 2.7 Option F route alignment

Option F

1

- Northern section of route F, which follows a newly constructed path

2

- The route is not as attractive as other options in this report, as it barely provides any coastal views

3

- Sections along the route may also feel isolating to some users and therefore may require some lighting improvements

4

- Sections along the route, particularly when moving southwards, would require complete resurfacing works to be accessible to a variety of users

Criteria	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	Option E	Option F
Coherent	Although there is a deviation, once built properly, the route should be easily navigated and it's unlikely that users would face any disruptions	Although there is a deviation, once built properly, the route should be easily navigated and it's unlikely that users would face any disruptions	Although there is a deviation, once built properly, the route should be easily navigated and it's unlikely that users would face any disruptions	Although this route follows a loop, once built properly it should be easily navigated	Although there is some deviation along the northern and southern end of the route, once built properly it should be easily navigated	This route follows a north-south alignment and should be easy to navigate
Direct	This route is moderately direct and does not involve a lot of extra distance	This route follows a similar alignment to route A, and is moderately direct	This route is moderately direct, and follows a similar alignment to routes A and B	This route is low in directness and takes users around a loop instead of heading directly south	This route is moderately direct	This route is direct
Deviation factor	1.5	15	1.5	2.1	1.5	1.2
Safe (physical)	There are houses near the north-eastern end of the path, where traffic may come from. However, with signage and other safety measures, safety can be maintained	Similar to option A, traffic may come from the north-eastern end of the paths, posing a safety risk for users. This can be maintained with safety signs	Besides the possible traffic coming from the north-eastern end of the path, other physical implications include the slopes on either sides of the flood defence mound which could be a falling hazard	This route is reasonably safe with little to no hazards along the path	This route follows the existing haul road and PROW path. Although this route is being constructed to move material around the site, we anticipate that vehicle volumes would be low and any safety issues could be addressed	This route follows an existing permissive route and has little physical hazards
Safe (social)	On the eastern end there are houses and a car park that may provide surveillance, and make people feel safer. There are also some buildings in the far southern end. However, as you move westwards from The Sportsman end, there is minimal lighting which could make people feel unsafe at night. This can be maintained with improved lighting throughout the path	Similar to option A, there are buildings and a car park near the north-eastern end of the path which may help to provide surveillance. However, there would also need to be improved lighting here as you move westwards	Existing conditions are the same as in options A and B where there is The Sportsman and other buildings on the north-eastern end which may help people to feel safer. As you move westwards, the path is more isolated	The path is isolated with no lighting which may make users feel unsafe. Buildings are further to the south and east	This route starts at the same place as routes A , B and C therefore it also benefits from existing buildings at the north-eastern end, which may help people to feel more secure when using the path. However, it gets more isolating as you move westwards through the site. This route could also benefit from improved lighting and wayfinding	Although this route is not as far west as other options, it may get isolating as one moves southwards
Comfortable	The area is partly grass which could be difficult to cycle on for non-standard cycle vehicles. This area also includes a dirt road which would require resurfacing works	Resurfacing works may be required	It may be uncomfortable for some users to move up and down the path (up and down the mound). A ramp would need to be installed here if possible. Resurfacing works would also be required as most of the path is currently comprised of mud and grass	Resurfacing works may be required	Although the southern section of the path may require resurfacing works, users benefit from newly constructed and smoother surfaces along the haul road.	The existing permissive path may require resurfacing works as it is currently comprised of grass and dirt in most areas

Attractive	Initial site observations suggest that these routes are similar in terms of attractiveness. They do offer scenic or natural views, and although there are some houses and buildings nearby, these routes are generally poorly lit and improvements could be made to wayfinding. Additionally, routes A, B, C and D would require resurfacing works throughout their entire length in order to be fully accessible to a wide variety of users including cyclists, those in wheelchairs, prams, etc.				This route offers scenic views, and an additional benefit that adds to its attractiveness is that parts of option E near the substation have been newly built, offering smooth and compact surfaces for users. However, the southern section following the PROW would require resurfacing works	This route barely provides natural views (with the exception of its northern-most section) and may also require surfacing and lighting improvements
Ecology	Within the Swale Ramsar, SPA, SSSI, LNR (designated for birds). Within most sensitive ecological mitigation area of solar park. **Very high ecology risk**	Within the Swale Ramsar, SPA, SSSI, LNR (designated for birds), but scores lower in priority habitat inventory. **High ecology risk**	Within the Swale Ramsar, SPA, SSSI, LNR (designated for birds), but scores lower in priority habitat inventory. **High ecology risk**	Adjacent to the Swale Ramsar, SPA, SSSI, LNR (designated for birds). Within coastal and floodplain grazing marsh mitigation area of solar park. **High ecology risk**	Within the Swale Ramsar, SPA, SSSI (designated for birds), however route is on road for this section. This route has a shorter section within coastal and floodplain grazing marsh mitigation area in comparison to other alignments. **Moderate ecology risk**	Only a short section within designated sites, and route mostly follows existing track being upgraded as part of solar park development. **Moderate ecology risk**
Summary	Although these routes may be deemed as more rural, the core design principles outlined in LTN 1/20 below (Figure 2.8) were applied against each option as guidance. We also added ecological information as part of the assessment. Following our appraisal we found that most routes are similar in characteristics in that they would require resurfacing works as part of their development and that certain sections feel isolated and would need improvements to wayfinding or lighting. However the following differences were found: 1. Although all routes pose ecological risks, route E and F were assessed as posing the least ecological impacts, while Option A has the highest ecological impacts (further discussed in Chapter 3). 2. Routes E and F are the only options which offer a newly built road with high quality surfaces, promoting comfort and accessibility for all users. Route E is the only one of these that would provide an alternative alignment for the NCN as route F travels north-south across the solar park site. 3. Route E is likely to be the most economical option because it utilises existing surfaced routes for the most part. 4. Route D is the most indirect option and offers the least in terms of social safety as it is the most isolated option.					

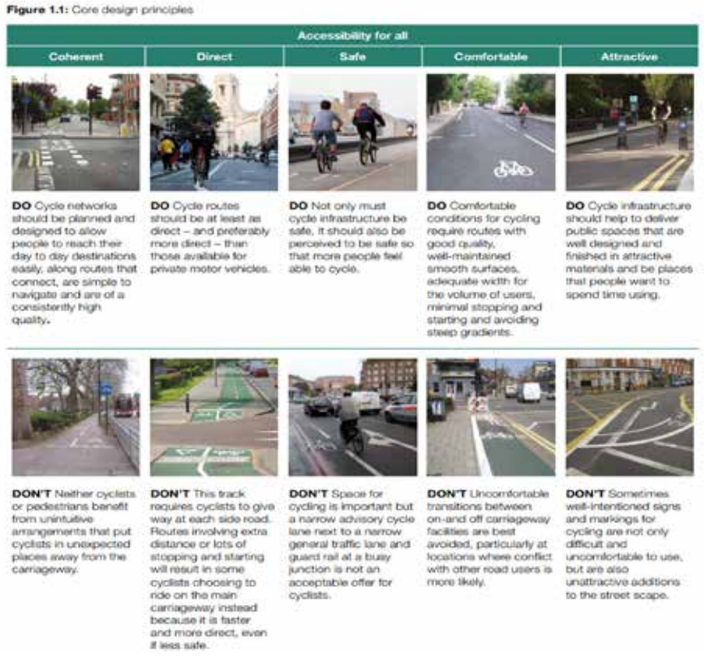


Figure 2.8 Core Design Principles (LTN 1/20)

3 Ecological Review

Overview

This appraisal has involved the initial collation and review of contextual information such as designated sites occurring within the potential zone of influence of the route options at Cleve Hill Solar Park. Some of the ecology documents associated with the planning application submitted for the Solar Park were also reviewed. No ecological site visit nor data search has been undertaken as part of this assessment.

Designated Sites

Route options A, B, C and E are located within the Swale Ramsar, Special Protection Area (SPA), Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (Figure 3.1) for varying lengths.

The Swale includes the largest remaining areas of freshwater grazing marsh in Kent and is representative of the estuarine habitats found on the north Kent coast. The habitats include mudflats, saltmarsh, and freshwater grazing marsh with the latter being intersected by extensive dykes and fleets. The area is particularly notable for the internationally important numbers of wintering and passage wildfowl and waders, and there are also important breeding populations of a number of bird species.

Options A, B and C are not on road and therefore there will be direct loss of habitat within the designated site, and disturbance to birds associated with the designated site is considered more likely.

Any works within this designated site will require Natural England (NE) consent, which is unlikely to be granted unless it is demonstrated that proposals won't negatively impact upon the habitats and species associated with the designation. In this instance wintering and nesting birds will be of importance, and the habitats supported by the designated site.

Early consultation with NE is recommended to discuss the proposals, agree a scope of further ecology work and a suitable mitigation strategy.

The eastern 785m of option E is located within the designated sites, however, while within the designated sites option E follows Faversham / Seasalter Road. Birds associated with the designated site will already be habituated to road traffic and it is considered unlikely that increased pedestrian and cycle usage will cause additional disturbance.

Habitat – Priority Habitat Inventory

Route options A, B, C and E all follow the PRoW positioned between the solar arrays, in areas which are proposed to be coastal and floodplain grazing marsh compensation habitat for the Solar Park development (see more detail in following section). Route option E is within this habitat for the shortest length of approximately 1.1km.

Routes A, B, and a very small part of F pass through areas of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh (priority habitat), (Figure 3.2).

Route option C follows the path along the top of the flood defence bund. A walkover by Sustrans Network Development Manager indicated that this is managed as short grassland, however the Priority Habitat Inventory indicates lowland fen (an irreplaceable habitat) is also present, so this should be verified by an ecologist if option C were to be taken forward.

Saltmarsh - an irreplaceable habitat which is very vulnerable to disturbance and damage – is mapped to the north of the flood defence bund, upon which option C runs, so any disturbance would have to be carefully managed during construction of option C.

Option E utilises the PRoW corridor, as described above, then follows an existing track – the proposed haul road within the Solar Park – before joining Faversham / Seasalter Road. Very little habitat loss is therefore anticipated for this section.

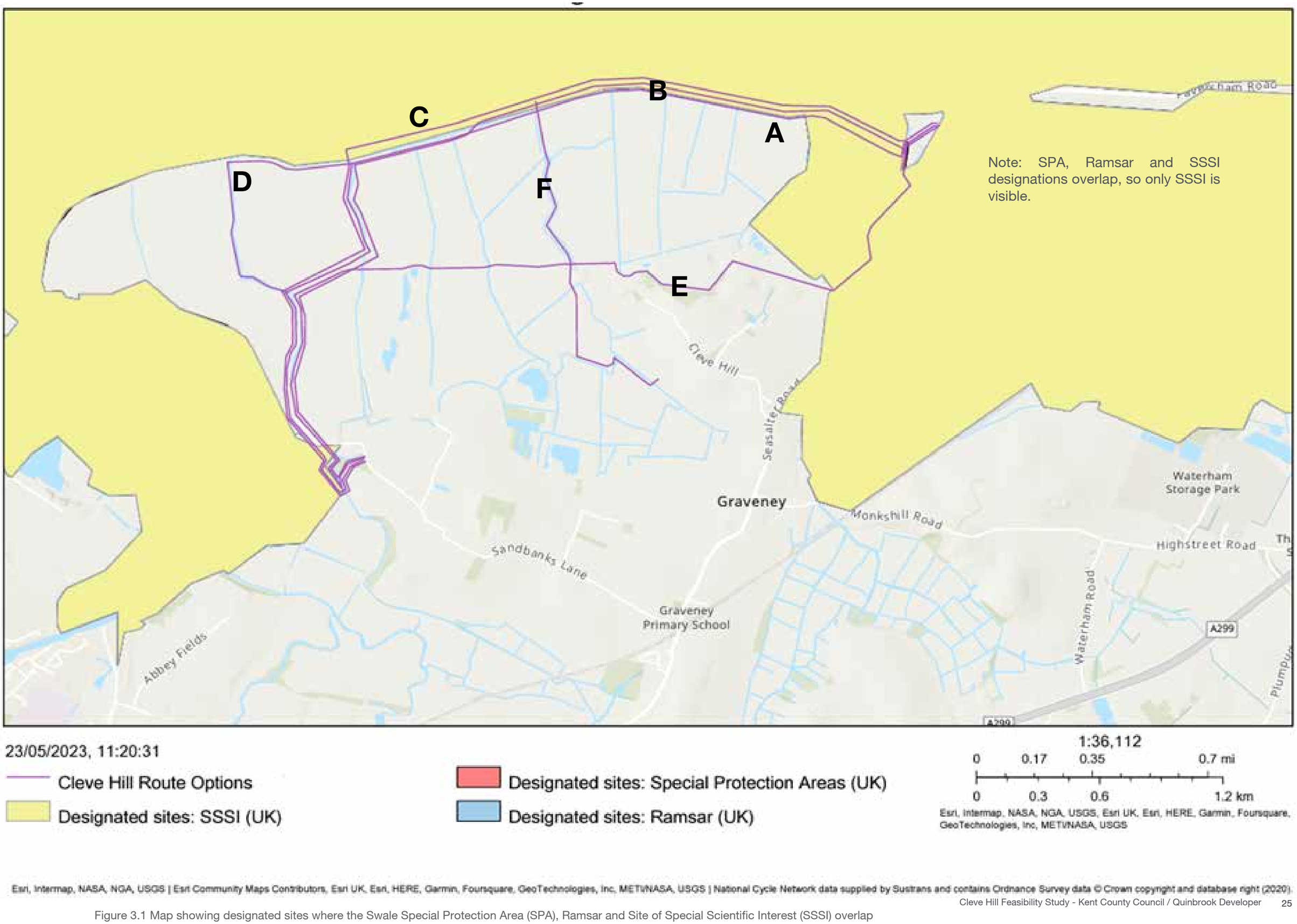


Figure 3.1 Map showing designated sites where the Swale Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) overlap

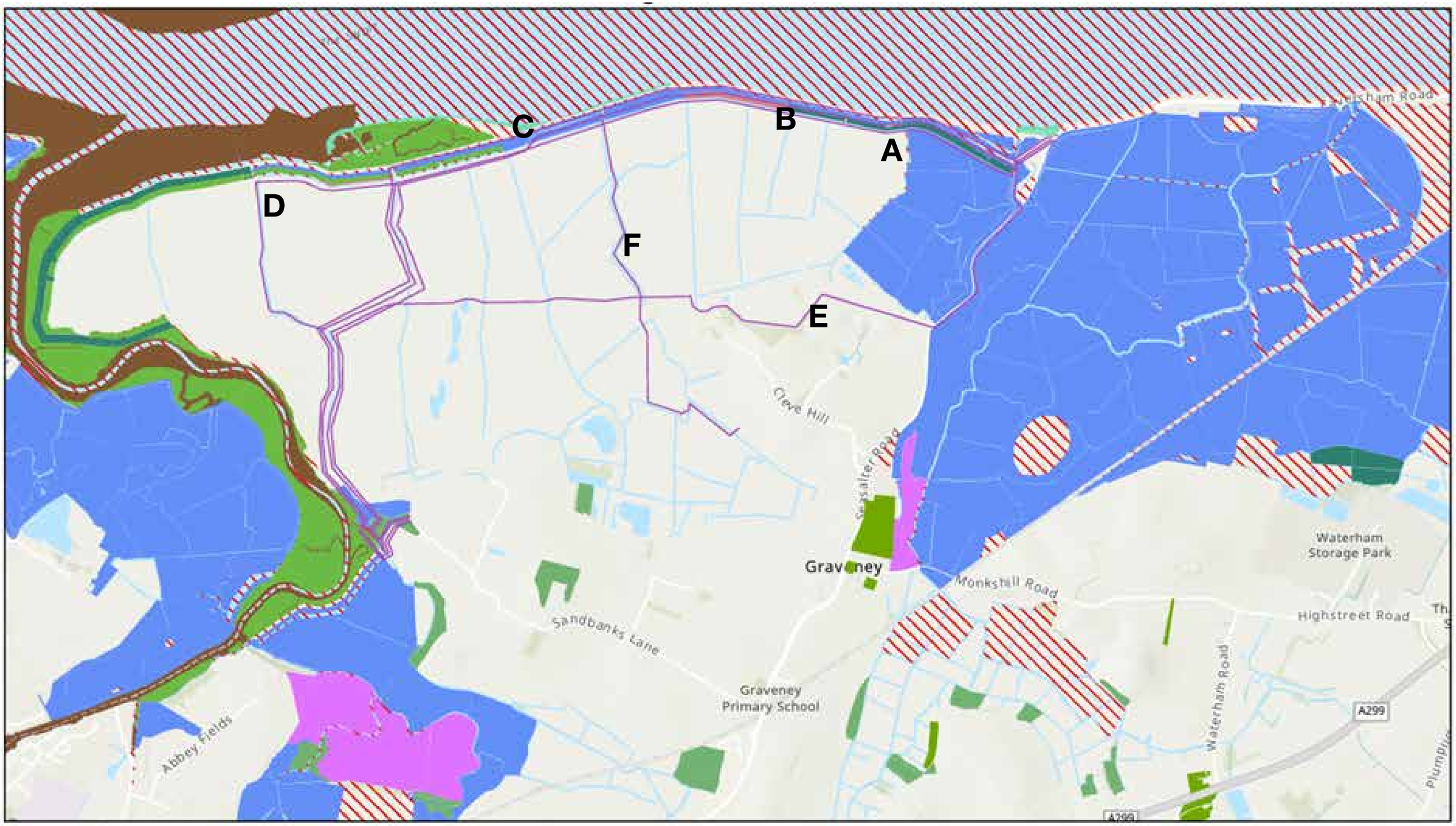


Figure 3.2 Map showing priority habitats

Solar Park Proposals

The Solar Park development incorporated extensive mitigation into the proposals to reduce the impact of the scheme on the designated sites, protected species and habitats to an acceptable level (Figure 3.3). The application was assessed and granted on the basis of this mitigation being included.

Sustrans met informally with the ecological project manager for the solar park on 8th June 2023 to discuss the ecological mitigation incorporated into the solar park.

Approximately 33ha to the northeast of the solar park development is set aside for the creation of arable reversion and fresh water grazing marsh (Figure 3.3). These are a critical part of the solar park mitigation package for wintering birds which will be displaced from their existing foraging habitat within the solar park development. Route option A passes through this sensitive area and is likely to cause disturbance to the birds using this feature, and is therefore unlikely to be feasible from an ecology perspective.

All the route options utilise sections of proposed coastal and floodplain grazing marsh between the solar arrays for varying lengths. These areas are designed to provide a foraging resource for displaced bird species such as marsh harrier, barn owl, short-eared owl and other farmland bird species.

Route option E uses the shortest length of solar park mitigation area, approximately 1.1km. This section is PRoW and is a wide corridor between the solar arrays, incorporated into the solar park predominantly for amenity and recreational value rather than as ecology mitigation. The habitats created within this corridor are being created site wide and other areas are considered to be of more importance as ecology mitigation than the PRoW corridor.

Route option F is within the solar park mitigation areas for a longer length than option E, however almost the whole route is on an existing track. So ecological impacts would be low.

Planning consent for the solar park has been granted from the planning inspectorate based on the proposed mitigation plan. In order to progress a route through any of the solar park areas a separate planning consent will be required. This will assess the cumulative impacts of the solar park development and the proposed path. Therefore, route option E which impacts upon the solar park mitigation for the shortest length, and only within the PRoW corridor is preferable from an ecology perspective. Alternatively, there is route option F which utilises an existing track through the solar park. However, mitigation will still be required to offset the habitat loss and impacts to species. This could be difficult to deliver given the limited available space therefore opportunities for offsite mitigation should be explored.

Next Steps – Ecology

A new planning consent will be required to bring any of these routes forward.

The desktop review indicated that route options E and F are the preferred routes from an ecological perspective. Route option F will have the least impact as it utilises an existing track for almost the entire length. However this route does not provide good connectivity to the NCN so it does not meet a key criterion of this feasibility study.

Route option E utilises existing road and track for a large part of the alignment, meaning ecological impacts will be low. The section which passes through mitigation areas of the solar park are the shortest and are on the PRoW alignment which was designed to be of predominantly amenity and recreational value rather than as ecology mitigation.

To bring this scheme forward a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) including a full habitat survey will be required in the first instance. The PEA will make recommendations if any further surveys will be required to inform scheme design.

A detailed review of the ecology documents submitted to support the solar park proposal should be undertaken, so the cumulative impacts of the scheme can be fully assessed.

A 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) will become mandatory for any planning applications submitted after November 2023, so BNG assessment will be required. Opportunities for offsetting BNG loss are likely to be difficult to achieve on site due to limited space, so offsite opportunities should be explored.

Consent from Natural England is required for any works to take place within the boundary of the SSSI. If route option E was selected, consent is likely to be granted since the route is on road through the SSSI.

Key ecology stakeholders should be consulted at an early stage. This should include the Kent Wildlife Trust and the RSPB in addition to Natural England.

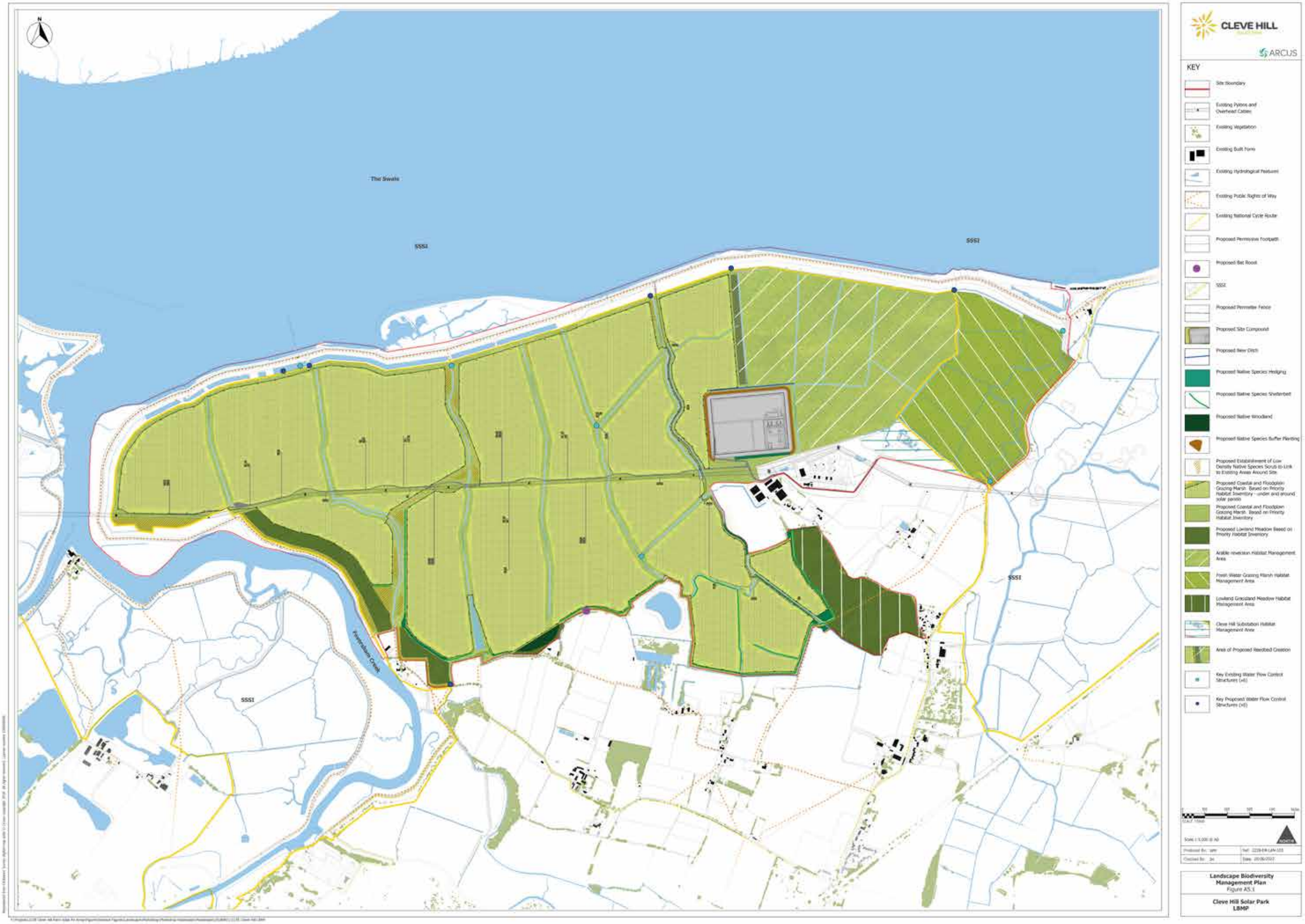


Figure 3.3 Solar Park Landscape Biodiversity Management Plan

Element	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	Option E	Option F
Designated Sites	Within the Swale Ramsar, SPA, SSSI, (designated for birds).	Within the Swale Ramsar, SPA, SSSI, (designated for birds).	Within the Swale Ramsar, SPA, SSSI, (designated for birds).	Adjacent to the Ramsar, SSSI and LNR designated site (designated for birds)	Within the Swale Ramsar, SPA, SSSI (designated for birds), however route is on road for this section so impact to the designated site is considered unlikely.	Approximately 35m of the northern-most part of this alignment is within the Swale Ramsar, SPA, SSSI (designated for birds)
Priority Habitat Inventory	Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh (priority habitat)	N/A	Along the top of the flood defence bund. Short grassland. Lowland fen (irreplaceable habitat) is mapped as present, however this would need to be verified by an ecologist as a walkover by Sustrans Network Development Manager suggested that this is absent.	N/A	On road or existing track for much of its length.	Approximately 35m of the northern-most part of this alignment is within the Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh (priority habitat)
Species	Within an Important Bird Area (IBA).	Within an IBA	Within an IBA	N/A	Within an IBA for the section which is on road so impacts are considered unlikely	Approximately 35m of the northern-most part of this alignment is within an IBA
Review of Planning Docs	Alignment is within the most sensitive area of ecological mitigation area within the solar park – arable reversion and saltwater grazing marsh.	Alignment is within the coastal and floodplain grazing marsh mitigation area of the solar park for approximately 2.1km. This area is along PRoW corridor with predominantly amenity and recreational value rather than as ecology mitigation.	Alignment is within the coastal and floodplain grazing marsh mitigation area of the solar park for approximately 2.1km. This area is along PRoW corridor with predominantly amenity and recreational value rather than as ecology mitigation.	Alignment is within the coastal and floodplain grazing marsh mitigation area of the solar park, but not within the PRoW corridor, so ecological impacts anticipated to be high.	Alignment is within the coastal and floodplain grazing marsh mitigation area of the solar park but it uses the least amount of mitigation habitat (1.1km) when compared to the other route options. This area is along the PRoW corridor with predominantly amenity and recreational value rather than as ecology mitigation.	Alignment is within the ecological mitigation area of the solar park for approximately 1.8km, however route utilises an existing track so habitat loss is anticipated to be low.
Ecology risk	**Very high**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**

4 Land Ownership Review

Overview

Land Registry enquiries have been completed as part of this review. Freehold landowners have not yet been contacted as the preferred alignment is yet to be agreed upon by all parties. It is understood that rights to construct and/or permit cycling in the area are in the gift of the developer, Quinbrook, under provisions contained in 40-year lease agreements negotiated with relevant landowners. Freehold landowners will be consulted/contacted at the appropriate time once the preferred route option alignment has been agreed with Quinbrook and Kent County Council.

Land Ownership

Land title numbers can be seen below for each route option, starting from the east on Faversham Road going south to join the current NCN 1 alignment. **Landowner names have purposely been omitted due to privacy requirements.**

Route A

- K423783 -
- K733594 -
- TT108397 -
- K561251 -
- TT8365 -

Route B

- K423783 -
- 733594 -
- TT108397 -
- K413346 -
- TT8365 -

Route C

- K423783 -
- K733594 -
- TT108397 -
- K413346 -
- TT8365 -

Route D

- TT8365 -

Route E

- K423783 -
- K733594 -
- TT8365 -
- K956906 -

Route F

- TT8365 -
- K413346 -

Please note, the south west section of Route Options A, B, C and E is the same alignment. From their convergence with the southern tip of Route Option D, this section consists of the following land titles:

- K407707 -
- K700390 -
- K405136 -
- K357173 -
- K634938 -
- K706267 -
- TT39500 -
- K372858 -

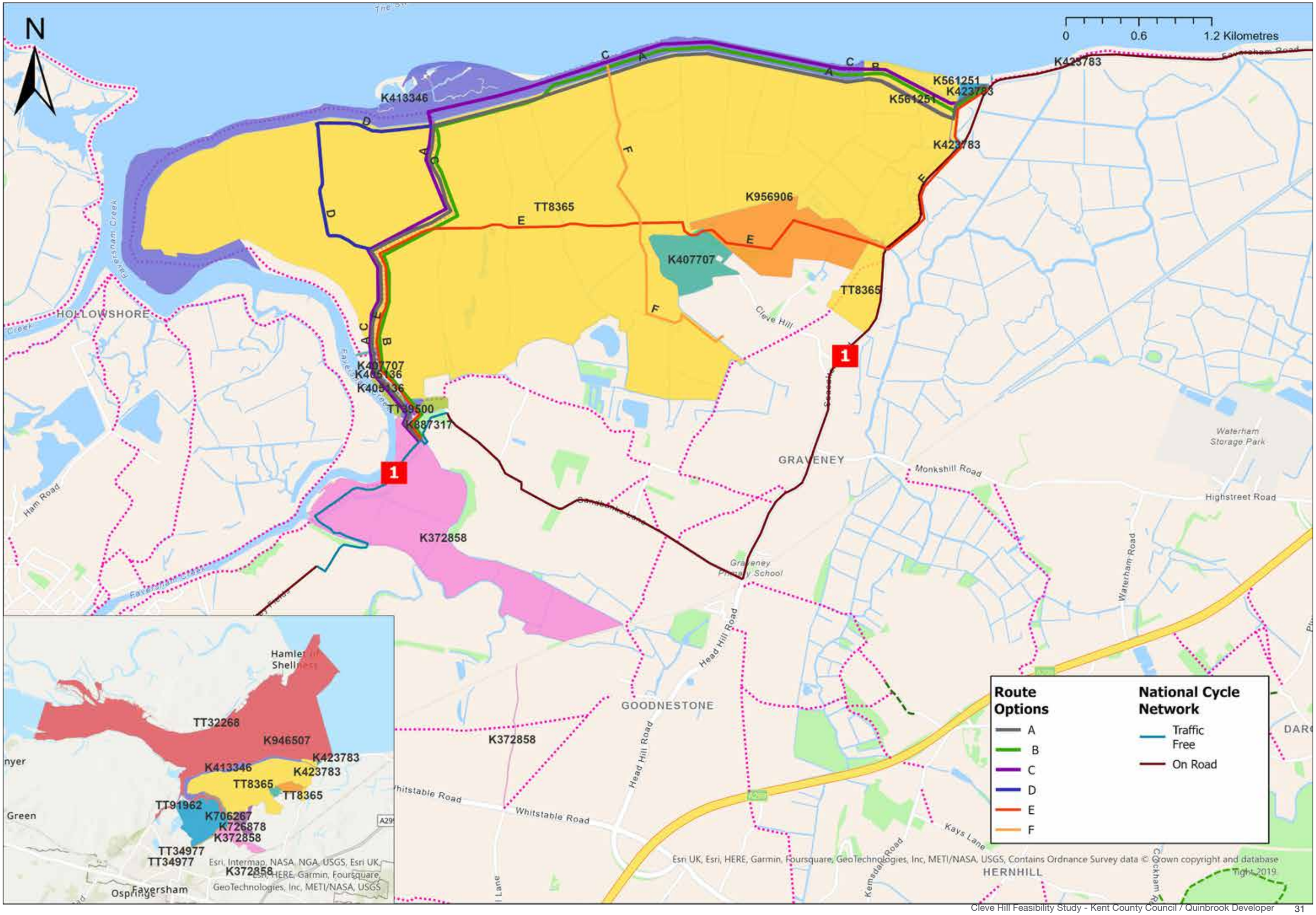


Figure 4.1 Landownership titles for each route option, and around the wider study site

5 Preferred Route Alignment

This feasibility study considers six options for re-routing National Cycle Network Route 1 through the Cleve Hill Solar Park site. Based on this assessment, two options have been identified as preferred alignments: routes E and B.

Route E

Route E is deemed as the primary preferred route alignment based on the following:

- The route utilises a new east-west quality surfaced road installation with anticipated low traffic movements post construction. These surface improvements promote route comfort and attractiveness, and will lower the total costs of constucting an entirely new route
- Consent to use the haul road is in the gift of the developers
- Moderate ecological impacts compared to other routes: option E utilities solar park mitigation habitat for approximately 1.1km, which is the shortest length of disturbance of all routes and the mitigation area is within a PRoW corridor with mainly amenity and recreational value.

Challenges of Option E include:

- Landowner consent will be required
- Potential challenges regarding the security of solar park infrastructure
- Landownership east of the sub-station may not be in the gift of the developer
- May not be as attractive to leisure users, in terms of providing coastal scenery, when compared to other routes assessed in this report
- The southern section which follows the PROW will require potential surface upgrades to provide a fully accessible route
- This is not a totally traffic free option, as the northern section still follows Faversham Road
- Ecology risks may still present a challenge

Figure 5.1 Route E along the newly built road

Figure 5.2 Route B along the toe of the flood defence mound

Route B

This study also presents route B as a secondary preferred alignment based on the following:

- It is very close to the preferred route of the local community (option A)
- It is an attractive alignment that will provide users with scenic and natural views
- It minimises interaction with solar park infrastructure
- The north-eastern section of the route is in the gift of the developer
- Entirely traffic free

Challenges of Option B include:

- Landownership permission is required, for example, from Kent Wildlife Trust
- Environment Agency permission required
- High ecological constraints
- Planning permission likely required
- Potential high costs of constructing a new route

6 Design Considerations

Although the route options included in this report are rural in nature, Cycle Infrastructure Design Guidance document Local Transport Note 1/20 is relevent throughout the routes for traffic-free paths.

Local Transport Note 1/20

LTN 1/20 outlines the following summary principles:

1. Cycle infrastructure should be accessible to everyone from 8 to 80 and beyond: it should be planned and designed for everyone. The opportunity to cycle in our towns and cities should be universal.
2. Cycles must be treated as vehicles and not as pedestrians. On urban streets, cyclists must be physically separated from pedestrians and should not share space with pedestrians. Where cycle routes cross pavements, a physically segregated track should always be provided. At crossings and junctions, cyclists should not share the space used by pedestrians but should be provided with a separate parallel route.
3. Cyclists must be physically separated and protected from high volume motor traffic, both at junctions and on the stretches of road between them.
4. Side street routes, if closed to through traffic to avoid rat-running, can be an alternative to segregated facilities or closures on main roads – but only if they are truly direct.
5. Cycle infrastructure should be designed for significant numbers of cyclists, and for non- standard cycles. Our aim is that thousands of cyclists a day will use many of these schemes.
6. Consideration of the opportunities to improve provision for cycling will be an expectation of any future local highway schemes funded by Government.
7. Largely cosmetic interventions which bring few or no benefits for cycling or walking will not be funded from any cycling or walking budget.
8. Cycle infrastructure must join together, or join other facilities together by taking a holistic, connected network approach which recognises the importance of nodes, links and areas that are good for cycling.
9. Cycle parking must be included in substantial schemes, particularly in town centres, trip generators and (securely) in areas with flats where people cannot store their bikes at home. Parking should be provided in sufficient amounts at the places where people actually want to go.
10. Schemes must be legible and understandable.
11. Schemes must be clearly and comprehensively signposted and labelled.
12. Major ‘iconic’ items, such as overbridges must form part of wider, properly thought-through schemes.
13. As important as building a route itself is maintaining it properly afterwards.
14. Surfaces must be hard, smooth, level, durable, permeable and safe in all weathers.
15. Trials can help achieve change and ensure a permanent scheme is right first time. This will avoid spending time, money and effort modifying a scheme that does not perform as anticipated.
16. Access control measures, such as chicane barriers and dismount signs, should not be used.
17. The simplest, cheapest interventions can be the most effective.
18. Cycle routes must flow, feeling direct and logical
19. Schemes must be easy and comfortable to ride.
20. All designers of cycle schemes must experience the roads as a cyclist.
21. Schemes must be consistent.
22. When to break these principles.

User dimensions

LTN 1/20 chapter 5 notes that it is essential to cater to all user types including people in wheelchairs, adapted cycles, prams, cargo bikes, etc (Figure 6.1). It is also important to consider extra width for cyclists in relation to their ‘dynamic’ width, which can vary depending on the speed and type of bike (Figure 6.3).

Design assumption for this study

For the purposes of this study, we have assumed a **3 metre wide shared use path with a bound surface** as this provides a high level of path comfort and accessibility for all legitimate users and is appropriate to a rural context. The eventual path specification will be responsive to local factors and constraints.

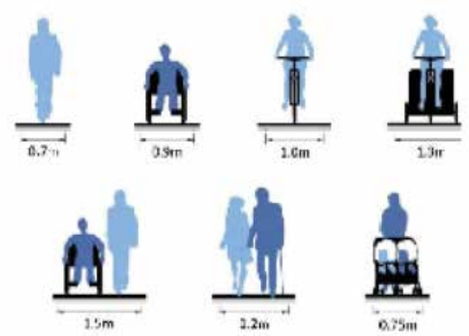


Figure 6.1 Width requirements for various users

Cycle flows	Minimum width
Up to 300 cyclists per hour	3.0m
Over 300 cyclists per hour	4.5m

Figure 6.2 Table showing recommended minimum width requirements (LTN 1/20)

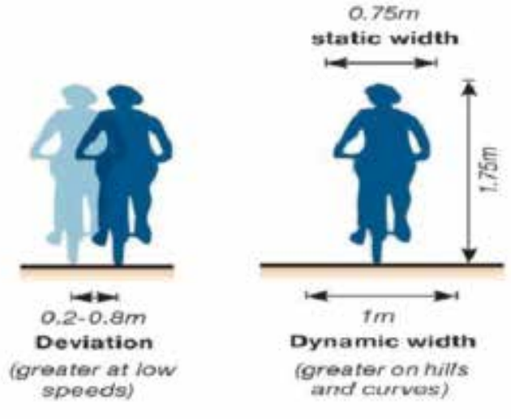


Figure 6.3 Width requirements for cyclists, taking into account the dynamic width

7 Summary and next steps

Overview

Cleve Hill Solar Park (CHSP) is an energy and solar storage area located one mile away from Faversham, Kent. Considering the magnitude of CHSP (having over 800,000 panels) and its capacity to generate over 50 megawatts, it has been categorised as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). Consequently, planning for this included a Development Consent Order (DCO), as noted under the Planning Act 2008.

The purpose of this study has been to evaluate potential route options for a walking and cycling route that re-aligns National Cycle Network (NCN) 1 through the proposed CHSP development site post construction. The current on-road alignment of NCN 1 along Faversham and Seasalter Roads is not safe due to high traffic speeds and flows.

Preferred Route Alignments

This report identified and assessed six route options, reviewing the benefits and constraints of each along with landownership and ecological information. Two preferred route alignments have been identified: **Option E is the primary route option and Option B is the secondary.** The reasons for these preferences are set out in the Preferred Alignment section of this report (pg. 32).

Next Steps

1. Share the draft report with project sponsor Kent County Council and the client Quinbrook for discussion and comment.
2. Publish the report for wider circulation to Swale District Council, Canterbury City Council, Local Community Groups, Freeholders and key statutory consultees for comment.
3. Seek landowner permission. This would be Quinbrook and/or Freehold landowners if required.
4. Seek other necessary consents and support for the preferred route option.
5. Agree next phase of works with Quinbrook and Kent County Council, subject to funding.

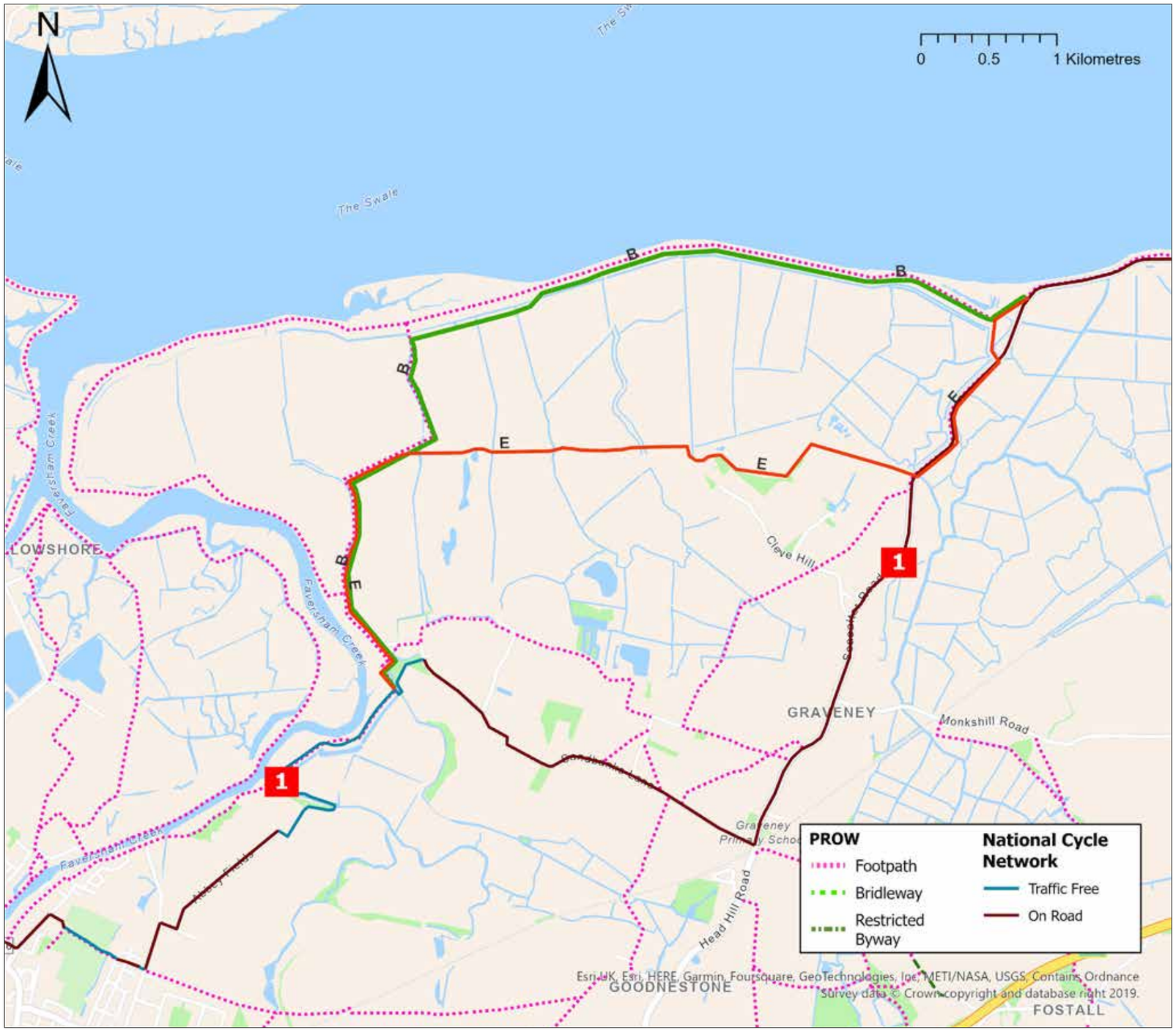


Figure 7.1 Preferred route alignments as indicated by Sustrans