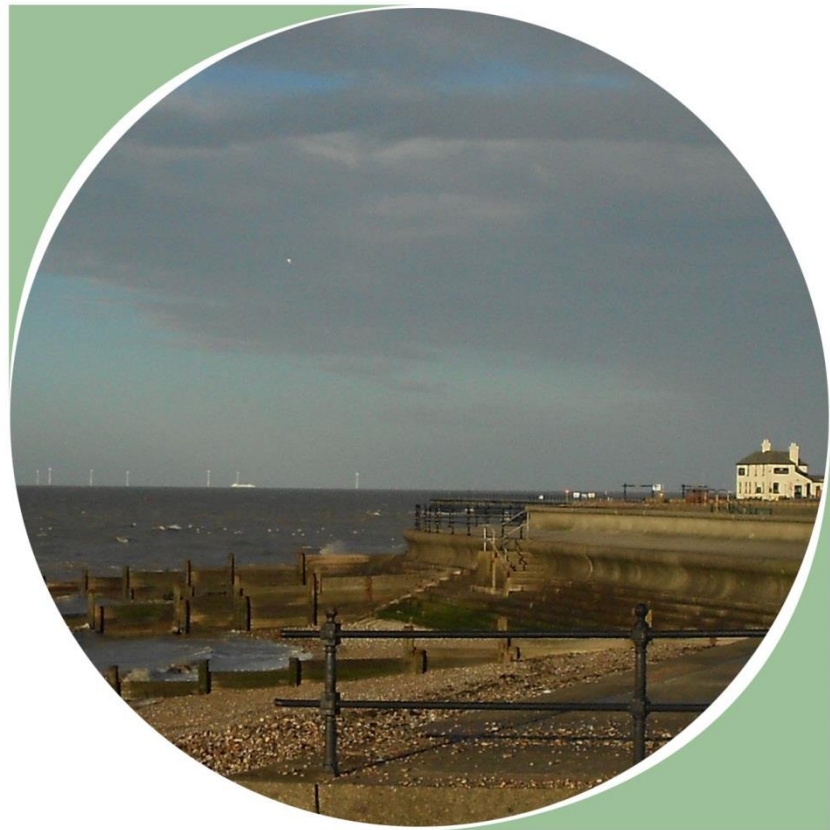




Thanet Coast & Sandwich Bay SPA Visitor Survey



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Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA Visitor
Survey



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Summary

This report presents the results of a visitor survey at the Thanet Coast & Sandwich Bay Special Protection Area (SPA). The survey was commissioned in order to inform the provision of mitigation measures relating to the SPA and in particular to identify existing levels and type of visitor use and the current zone of influence, reflecting the area where new development may result in changes in access to the SPA.

Survey work involved direct counts of people and interviews with a random sample of visitors at four locations. These locations were at the north-western part of the SPA (i.e. relevant to Canterbury) and surveys were undertaken in February and March. In each month, eight hours of survey work were undertaken at each location, split equally between weekends and weekdays. Survey work was broken up into two-hour sessions and survey effort was even across survey points and across weekends and weekdays and were evenly spread through the day.

Visitor interviews

- In total 192 visitor interviews were completed from 64 hours of survey time across the 4 locations.
- Hampton Slipway was the busiest and western Reculver survey point the quietest.

Visit specifics

- Most (90%) of interviewed groups were making a visit from home (rather than those staying with friends or tourists).
- 45% of groups stated their visit duration was between 30 and 59 minutes.
- 41% of interviewed groups made their visit either most days or daily.
- 65% of visitors arrived by car and 32% on foot.
- Of the regular (at least once a week) visitors by car, 90% lived within 9.8km of their visit destination and of the regular visits by those on foot, 90% lived within 1.8km of their visit destination.
- 58% of interviewed groups were accompanied by a dog.
- 62% of groups stated they visited to site equally all year.
- 42% of visitor groups made their visit to the survey location mainly because the site was 'close to home' and 17% because of the 'quality of the area / scenery'.

Activities

- Dog walking, walking, outing with the family, cycling, wildlife watching, enjoying the scenery, meeting up with friends and jogging were all activities undertaken by visitor groups.
- Dog walking was the most popular main activity cited by 57% of interviewed groups.

Routes

- 170 visitor routes were mapped with an average route length of 3.7km.
- On average dog walkers covered a distance of 3.5km.
- 20% of all visitor routes crossed onto the beach.

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Alternative sites

- 15% of visitors groups stated they would exercise their dog at a new inland site that was closer to their home, 22% stated they wouldn't and the remaining 63% were unsure.
- The most popular / important features to visitors about a new dog walking site, in order of popularity were 'safe for dog', 'ability to let dog off lead', 'more dog bins', 'closer to home' and 'more attractive surroundings'.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been prepared for Canterbury City Council, and presents the results of a visitor survey at the Thanet Coast & Sandwich Bay Special Protection Area (SPA). The survey was commissioned in order to inform the provision of mitigation measures relating to the SPA (and impacts to the SPA from recreation associated with new housing). In particular the visitor survey was required to identify existing levels and type of visitor use and the current zone of influence, reflecting the area where new development may result in changes in access to the SPA.

Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA

- 1.2 The SPA lies at the north-eastern tip of Kent and follows the coast. It consists of a long stretch of rocky shore, adjoining areas of estuary, sand dune, maritime grassland, saltmarsh and grazing marsh.
- 1.3 The SPA is designated for three species: Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria* (non-breeding) Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* (non-breeding) and Little Tern *Sterna albifrons* (breeding) In the 2001 SPA Review¹, Turnstone is the sole qualifying species, but advice from Natural England indicates that all three of the original qualifying species as listed in the original citation are the features that are legally protected.

Canterbury City – Local Plan

- 1.4 Canterbury City is a coastal district that centres on Canterbury City and includes the immediate surrounding area, including the coastal areas of Herne Bay and Whitstable. The Local Plan has been in progress for some time, initially being developed as a 'Core Strategy' under the local planning regime in place under the previous government. Now being taken forward as a 'local plan' the draft plan was released for public consultation in 2013, and a final plan is now being prepared, in light of all consultation comments received. This will then be submitted for Examination.
- 1.5 Canterbury is a prosperous district, being a major economic centre for East Kent and also an attractive tourist destination. House prices are high, which has left some local residents unable to afford to buy a home and the local plan recognises the need for low cost housing, including shared ownership and affordable homes. The plan sets out a requirement for 15,600 new homes over the 20 year plan period, equating to 780 new homes per year. This includes 4,000 new homes to the south of Canterbury, 2,800 at Herne Bay, 400 at Whitstable and a further 1,800 at rural sites at Sturry/Broad Oak and to the north of Hersden.
- 1.6 A Habitats Regulations Assessment Report was produced by Entec in 2010 for the then emerging Canterbury City Core Strategy, which was, in effect, a screening for the likelihood of significant effects and identified further assessment needs, particularly relating to recreational pressure, water abstraction and discharge and air pollution. The recommendation made in relation to recreational pressure was to consult Natural

¹ <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-2045-theme=default>

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England, and potentially to employ visitor management measures and/or provide alternative greenspace.

- 1.7 Since that time, Natural England has advised Canterbury City Council that with their current housing figures, there is the potential for recreational impacts on European sites and that before considering any mitigation options, an evidence base will need to be established. The visitor survey work will inform a plan led approach to protecting European site interest, with transparency and consistency for developers seeking to take forward the new housing that will be promoted within the local plan.

2. Methods

Visitor Survey questionnaire

2.1 The questionnaire (Appendix 1) was designed to gather numerous pieces of information from visitors to the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA relating to:

- Visitor type (e.g. a local resident or a holiday maker)
- Visit seasonality, duration, timing and frequency
- Transport mode used to access site
- Activity undertaken during visit and motivation for visiting
- The route taken by the visitor and whether this was reflective of their normal route
- Visitor demographics (age and gender)
- Home postcode
- The number of dogs observed with a visitor and whether these were seen on or off the lead

Survey Methodology

2.2 The visitor surveys comprised face to face interviews with a sample of visitors selected at random and a count ('tally') of all people, groups and dogs passing the surveyors location. Surveys were carried out at four locations (Map 1):

- The Hampton Public Slipway in Swalecliffe (location 1)
- Reculver Country Park; located at a path junction west of the visitor centre (location 2)
- Reculver Country Park; located to the east of the church ruins next to the interpretation board (location 3)
- Minnis Bay; a roaming surveyor at the end of the slipway from the car park, capturing multiple access points to the path (location 4)

2.3 Survey points were selected following an initial site visit and discussion with Canterbury City Council and Natural England. Rather than survey all access points the aim was to target a selection of survey points that were representative of the access along the shoreline, provided access to the areas used as high tide roosts by the Turnstones and were locations where visitors could easily be intercepted and interviewed. Only the parts of the SPA that were most relevant to Canterbury City were included. Two surveyors completed the visitor surveys with the survey work split equally between the two.

Survey dates per location are summarised in Table 1. In total, 8 days of face to face interviews were carried out, such that 16 hours of survey work were conducted at each survey location, split equally over one weekday and one weekend day. Each location was surveyed for a half day on both a weekday and weekend in February and a further half day on a weekday and weekend in March. Standardised counts and interviews were conducted in four two hour sessions; 0730-0930, 1000-1200, 1230-1430, 1500-1700.

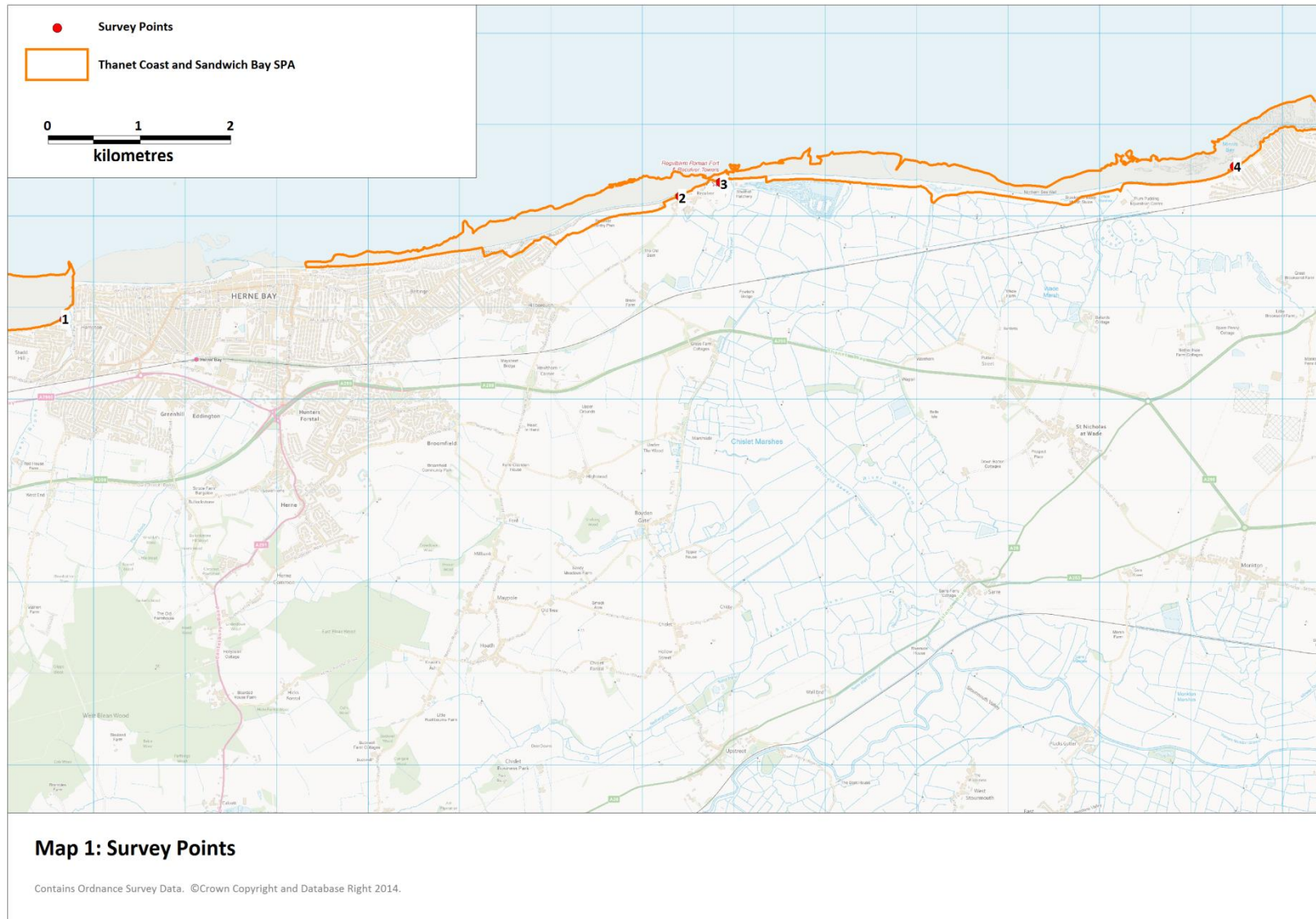
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Table 1: Survey dates and locations. Four hours of survey work (i.e. a half-day) were spent at each location on each date.

Survey Location	Day	February	March
1 – Hampton Slipway	Weekend	16/02/2014	22/03/2014
	Weekday	17/02/2014	24/03/2014
2 – Reculver Country Park	Weekend	15/02/2014	22/03/2014
	Weekday	18/02/2014	25/03/2014
3 – Reculver Country Park	Weekend	15/02/2014	23/03/2014
	Weekday	17/02/2014	24/03/2014
4 – Minnis Bay	Weekend	16/02/2014	23/03/2014
	Weekday	18/02/2014	25/03/2014

- 2.4 A random sample of people were interviewed, with the surveyors approaching the next potential interviewee encountered if not already interviewing. As many people as practicable were interviewed. Surveyors randomly selected people in each group to approach and where possible the focus was on interviewing those returning from their visit rather than those just starting their visit. Data were collected in the field using tablet computers. Due to persistently poor weather throughout the early winter period, it was necessary to carry out surveys in inclement weather, including some relatively high winds and rain during the February fieldwork.
- 2.5 No unaccompanied minors were interviewed and the numbers of people who refused to complete a survey or who had already been interviewed were also recorded. Weather conditions and any unusual activities, for example road works, access problems or other issues were noted and the surveyor provided an overview of the session at the end of the day.

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Data and analysis

- 2.6 The data were automatically collated from the tablets into a single data file as the fieldwork took place. These data were checked manually to ensure errors were removed and any duplicated surveys were deleted (duplicates being identified through home postcode and checks of responses).
- 2.7 Data analysis was carried out using Minitab (v10) and Excel 2010 and spatial analyses were conducted using MapInfo v10.0.1.
- 2.8 Visitor routes were recorded on maps during the interview, with the surveyor marking a line on a paper map shared with the interviewee. Routes were then digitised manually into GIS as polylines and were categorised as those which crossed the mean high water mark (MHW)² and those which remained on land between the cliff/promenade and the nearest parallel road to the shore.
- 2.9 Postcodes collected from the survey work were geo-coded using Royal Mail Postcode data files³.

² Available as OS Open data within Boundary Lines package

³ Contained OS spatial data available up to February 2014

3. Overview of data

Tally data

- 3.1 In total 192 interviews with visitor groups (Table 2) were completed over the 64 hours of survey time across the four locations (Map 1). Of the 192 interviews, 40% (76) were completed in the February survey sessions and the remaining 60% (116) in the March sessions. Of note were the weather conditions with rain occurring in 10 out of 16 sessions in February and only two during March (Table 3 and Table 4).
- 3.2 Across the four locations 660 adults, 315 dogs, 88 children and 84 cyclists were recorded entering the site through the survey locations (Table 2). This gives a visit rate through these locations during the survey session of 10.3 adults, 4.9 dogs, 1.8 children and 1.3 cyclists per hour. Overall the ratio of dogs to adults was 0.5 dogs per adult and 0.8 dogs per visitor group (a visitor group could contain several adults or children). Of interest the ratio of dogs per group was far higher in February with 0.7 dogs per adult and 1 dog per group which indicates that the majority of visitors using the site in February were doing so accompanied by a dog (Table 3).
- 3.3 On average the interview refusal rate across all the survey locations was 22% (Table 3) with a higher rate of 28% (Table 3) during the February surveys (the surveyor confirmed visitors who refused an interview did so because they did not want to stop in the poor weather). The refusal rate was far lower at 18% (Table 4) during the March survey sessions.
- 3.4 The tally counts of visitors and dogs entering the sites were highest at locations 1 (Hampton Slipway) and 4 (Minnis Bay) with location 2 at Reculver to the west of the visitor centre having the lowest totals (Table 2 and Map 2). A comparison between maps 3 and 4 show the number of visitors accessing the survey locations during the February sessions is markedly lower than the numbers recorded in the March surveys.
- 3.5 A higher proportion of children were recorded entering Minnis Bay in comparison to the other locations (Map 2) and a higher proportion cyclists were recorded visiting the sites in March (Map 4). Overall it appears the highest proportion of dogs was recorded through survey location 4 (Minnis Bay) (Map 2).
- 3.6 A higher number of visitor groups and adults were recorded entering each survey location during the weekend sessions in comparison to the weekday sessions (Table 5 and Table 6) but these differences were not statistically significant (Groups - $\chi^2=5.72$, $df=3$ $P=0.26$ and adults $\chi^2=5.32$, $df=3$ $P=0.15$).

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Table 2: Summary of all visitor tally information from February and March 2014 survey work

February and March 2014 Surveys		Entering					Leaving				Interview		
Survey location	Sessions with rain	Groups	Adults	Children	Dogs	Cyclists	Groups	Adults	Children	Dogs	Total	Refusals	Refusal rate (as % visitors approached)
1 (Hampton Slipway)	0	126	209	20	94	37	121	186	17	77	54	12	18
2 (Reculver CP)	4	70	107	4	41	14	59	93	4	49	40	5	11
3 (Reculver CP)	6	93	168	23	64	24	95	159	13	50	46	20	30
4 (Minnis Bay)	2	126	176	41	116	9	115	171	28	95	52	17	25
Total	12	415	660	88	315	84	390	609	62	271	192	54	22

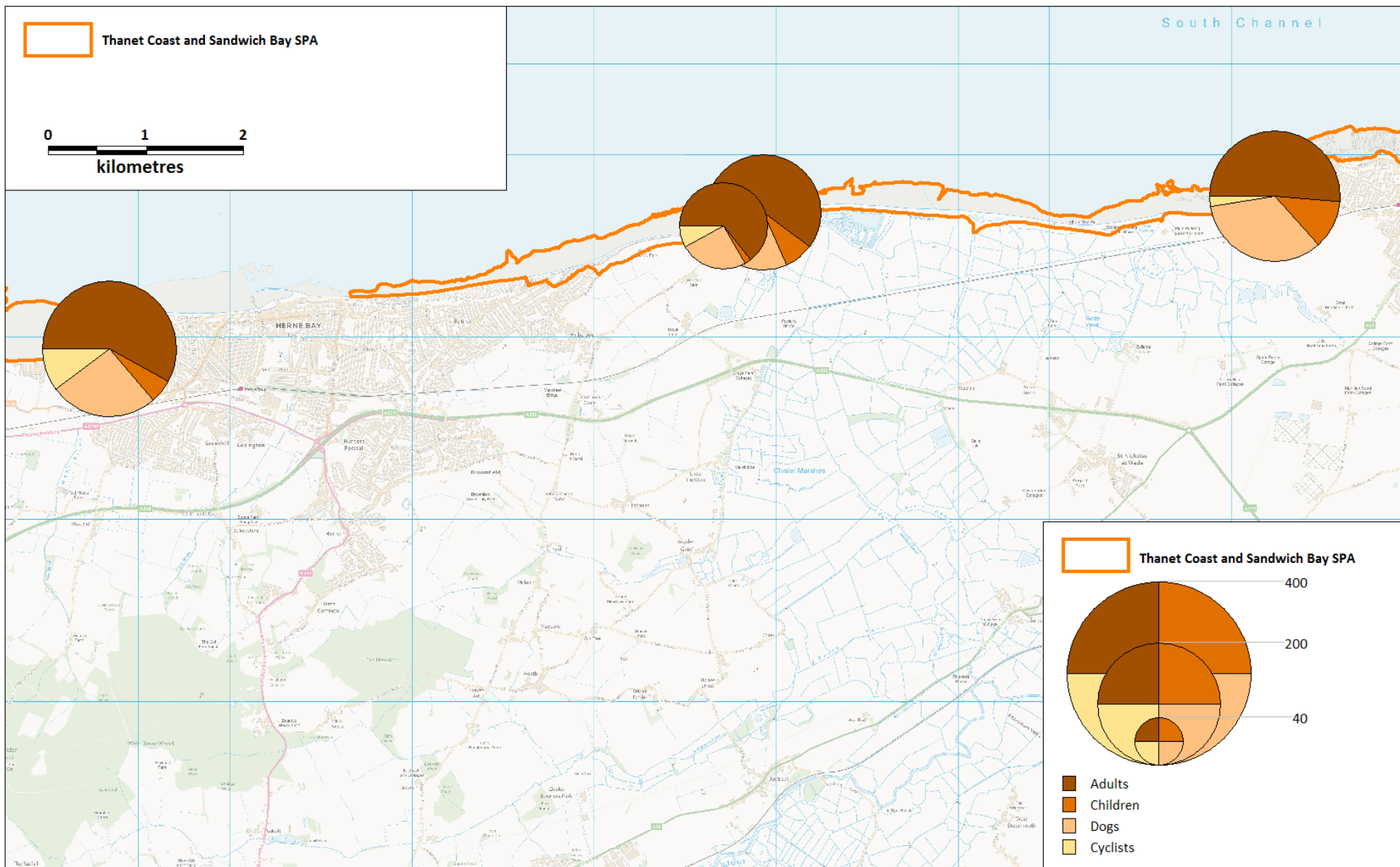
Table 3: Summary of visitor tally information from February 2014 survey work

February 2014 Surveys		Entering					Leaving				Interview		
Survey location	Sessions with rain	Groups	Adults	Children	Dogs	Cyclists	Groups	Adults	Children	Dogs	Total	Refusals	Refusal rate (as % visitors approached)
1 (Hampton Slipway)	0	27	47	10	28		37	52	1	22	22	6	21
2 (Reculver CP)	4	31	48	2	23		21	40		20	15	4	21
3 (Reculver CP)	4	29	47	8	33	1	35	45		29	18	11	38
4 (Minnis Bay)	2	42	60	11	48	2	45	66	7	20	21	8	28
Total	10	129	202	31	132	3	138	203	8	91	76	29	28

Table 4: Summary of visitor tally information from March 2014 survey work

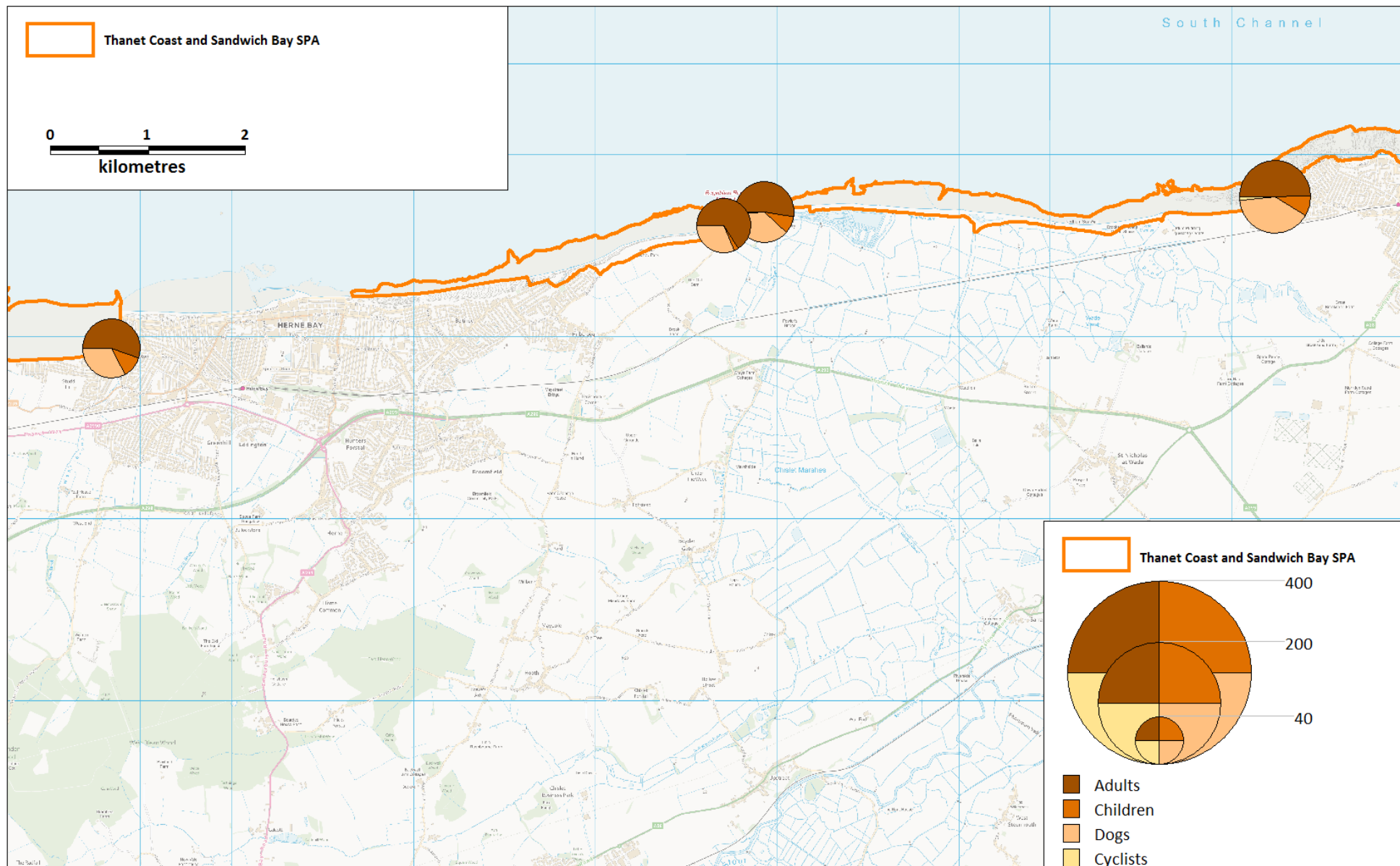
March 2014 Surveys		Entering					Leaving				Interview		
Survey location	Sessions with rain	Groups	Adults	Children	Dogs	Cyclists	Groups	Adults	Children	Dogs	Total	Refusals	Refusal rate (as % visitors approached)
1 (Hampton Slipway)		99	162	10	66	37	84	134	16	55	32	6	16
2 (Reculver CP)		39	59	2	18	14	38	53	4	29	25	1	4
3 (Reculver CP)	2	64	121	15	31	23	60	114	13	21	28	9	24
4 (Minnis Bay)		84	116	30	68	7	70	105	21	75	31	9	23
Total	2	286	458	57	183	81	252	406	54	180	116	25	18

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Map 2: Tally totals recorded entering each survey location during February and March 2014 survey sessions

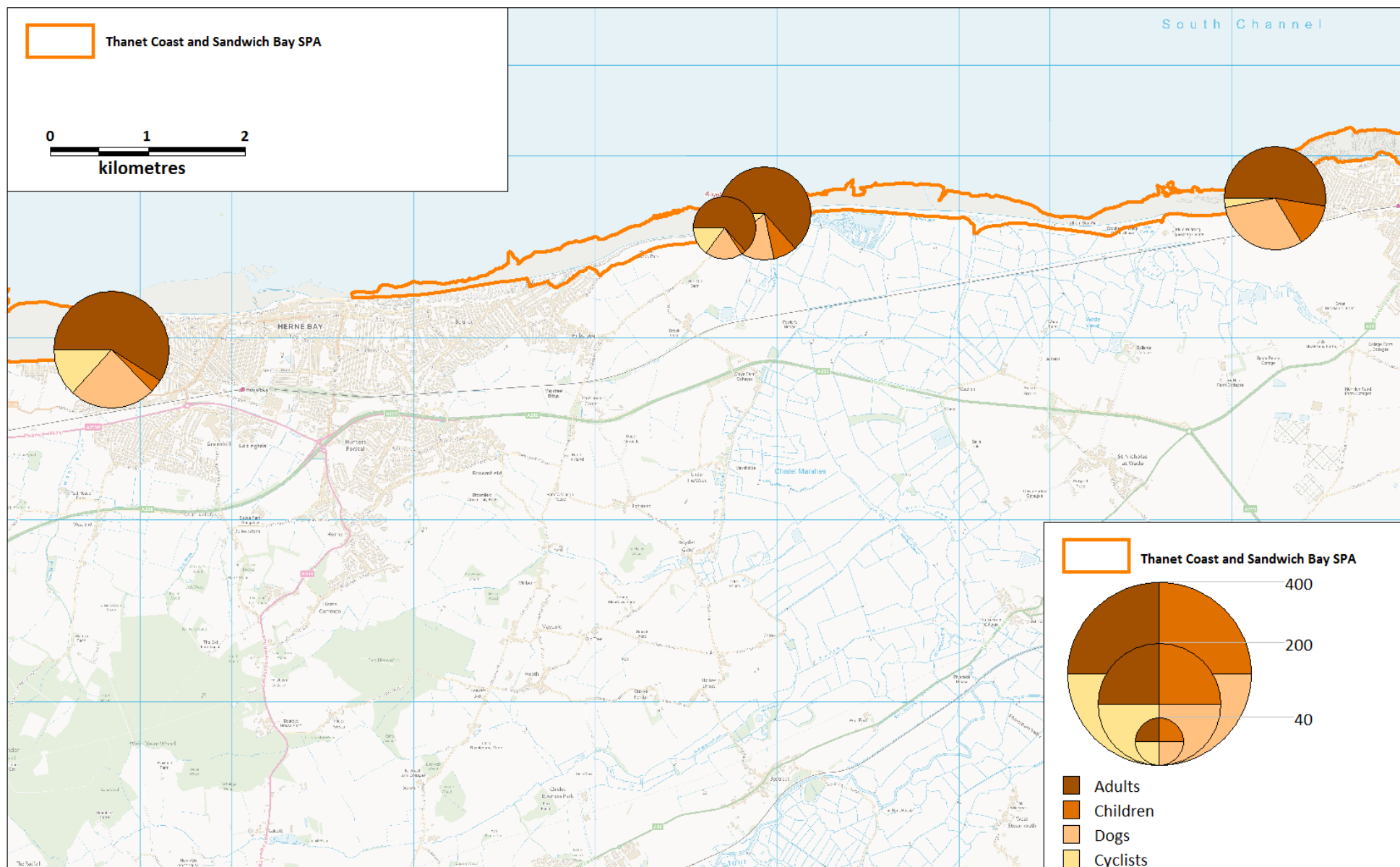
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Map 3: Tally totals recorded entering each survey location during February 2014 survey sessions

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Map 4: Tally totals recorded entering each survey location during March 2014 survey sessions

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Table 5: Tally totals entering each survey location on weekday survey sessions

Location	Groups	Adults	Children	Dogs	Cyclists
1 (Hampton Slipway)	67	92	3	49	26
2 (Reculver CP)	39	55	2	23	5
3 (Reculver CP)	39	64	8	36	16
4 (Minnis Bay)	54	71	6	51	1
Total	199	282	19	159	48

Table 6: Tally totals entering each survey location on weekend survey sessions

Location	Groups	Adults	Children	Dogs	Cyclists
1 (Hampton Slipway)	59	117	17	45	11
2 (Reculver CP)	31	52	2	18	9
3 (Reculver CP)	54	104	15	28	8
4 (Minnis Bay)	72	105	35	65	8
Total	216	378	69	156	36

4. Questionnaire results

Group size and number of dogs per group

- 4.1 Of the 192 interviewed groups (Table 7) 51% (99) interviews were completed by females and 48% (93) by males. In total 40% of the interviews were undertaken in February with the remaining 60% completed in March (Table 7).
- 4.2 In total 58% of interviewed groups in both February and March were accompanied by a dog (Table 7). Of these groups, 35% were accompanied by one dog and 43% by two. A higher percentage of groups with dogs off lead were observed during the March interview sessions. Of those groups accompanied by dogs, off lead dogs were observed in 74% of groups⁴.

Table 7: Summary of groups accompanied by dogs in different months

Interview sessions	Number of interviews (as % of all interviews)	Number groups with dogs (as % of interviews)	Groups with dogs off lead (as % of groups with dogs)
February	76 (40)	44 (58)	20 (26)
March	116 (60)	67 (58)	47 (41)
Total	192 (100)	111 (58)	142 (74)

- 4.3 The number of people in each group ranged from 1 to 10. In total 40% of visitor groups comprised of two people. The gender divide was roughly equal with 178 men (46%) and 208 women (54%) making the total of 386 visitors within the 192 interviewed groups.

Origin of visitors

- 4.4 Visitors were asked to describe their situation and 90% of interviewed groups confirmed they had made their visit from home, 6% were on holiday and 4% were on a day trip and staying with friends or family (Table 8). Two respondents declined to answer the question.

Table 8: Visit situation of interviewed visitor groups

Home or holiday	Response total (as %)
On a day trip/short visit and travelled from home	171 (90)
On holiday in the area	12 (6)
On a day trip/short visit and staying with friends/family	7 (4)
Total	190 (100)

Activities

- 4.5 Visitors were asked which activities they were undertaking during their visit and of those cited asked to name which was their 'main activity'. In total 189 main activity responses were given by the 192 interviewed groups (Table 9). Exactly the same proportion (57%) of interviewed visitor groups in February and March cited dog walking as their main activity with walking the second most popular main activity (Table 9).

⁴ A dog was categorised off lead if the surveyor observed the dog off lead during the interview (at the survey location only).

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4.6 Other main activities cited by groups include ‘outing with family’, ‘cycling’, ‘wildlife watching’, ‘enjoying the scenery’, ‘meeting up with friends’ and ‘jogging/power walking’.

4.7 The proportion of visitor groups undertaking different main activities varied with survey location (Figure 1) with a lower proportion of visitor groups undertaking dog walking as a main activity at location 3 (Reculver CP). Location 4 (Minnis Bay) contained the highest proportion of groups who stated dog walking as their main activity (Figure 1).

Table 9: Main activity responses cited by interviewed groups

Main activity	February	March
Dog walking	43 (57)	64 (57)
Walking	17 (22)	30 (27)
Outing with family	5 (7)	5 (4)
Other	1 (1)	6 (5)
Cycling	2 (3)	3 (3)
Wildlife watching	2 (3)	4 (4)
Enjoying scenery	3 (4)	0 (0)
Meeting up with friends	3 (4)	0 (0)
Jogging/Power walking	0 (0)	1 (1)
Total	76 (100)	113 (100)

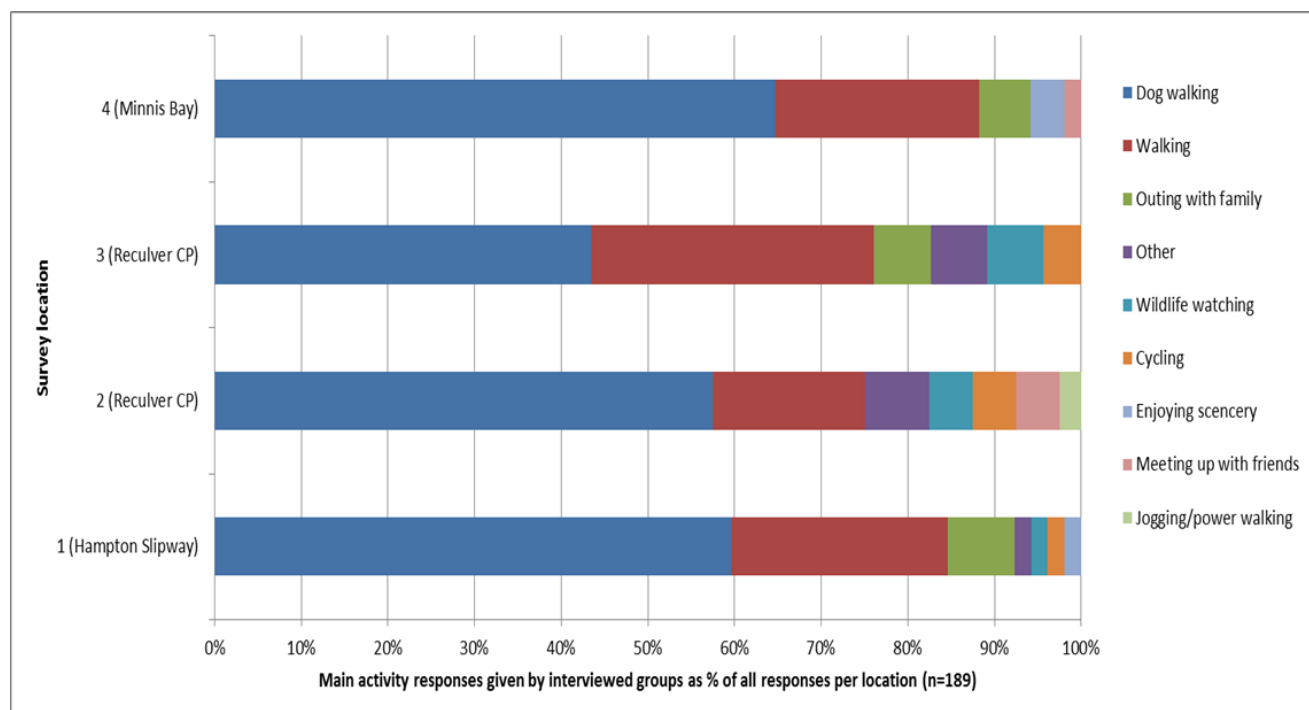


Figure 1: Main activity cited by interviewed groups expressed as a percentage of all main activity

Time spent in the area

4.8 Interviewed groups were asked how long they had or intended to spend in the area and overall 71% of visitor groups stated less than an hour (Table 10). When the responses of

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visitor groups who cited they were dog walking as main activity were considered 80% stated their visit duration was less than an hour (Table 10).

Table 10: Duration of visit

Duration of visit	All interview responses (as %)	Response total where main activity was cited as dog walking (as %)
Between 30 and 59 minutes	86 (45)	50 (47)
Less than 30 minutes	49 (26)	35 (33)
Between 1 hour and 1 hour, 59 minutes	40 (21)	17 (16)
More than 3 hours	10 (5)	3 (3)
Between 2 hours and 2 hours, 59 minutes	7 (4)	2 (2)
Total	192 (100)	107 (100)

Frequency of visit

4.9 Visitor groups were asked their visit frequency to the interview site and overall 18% stated they made a visit most days, 17% daily and 15% 1 to 3 times a week (Table 11). When visit frequency was considered by main activity a higher proportion of those dog walking visited the site more frequently with 26% making daily visits and 32% visiting most days (Table 11).

Table 11: Visit frequency of interviewed groups

Visit frequency	Groups where dog walking was not cited as main activity	Groups with dog walking cited as main activity	All responses
Most days (180+ visits)	18 (21)	32 (30)	35 (18)
Daily	17 (20)	28 (26)	33 (17)
1 to 3 times a week (40-180 visits)	13 (15)	21 (20)	29 (15)
Once a month (6-15 visits)	12 (14)	10 (9)	24 (13)
2 to 3 times per month (15-40 visits)	9 (11)	7 (7)	23 (12)
Sporadically / Don't know	8 (9)	4 (4)	22 (11)
First visit	7 (8)	3 (3)	14 (7)
Less than once a month (2-5 visits)	1 (1)	2 (2)	12 (6)
Total	85 (100)	107 (100)	192 (100)

Timing of visit

4.10 The most frequently cited time of day by interviewed groups to make a visit was between 9am and 12pm (23%) and between 3pm and 5pm (23%) (.).

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4.11 Table 12). The majority (62%) of responses indicated that visitor groups make their visits regularly throughout the year (Table 13). Only 20% of interviewed groups had planned their visit on the tide (Table 14).

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Table 12: Interviewees responses to the time of day they tend to make a visit

Time of day	Response total (as %)
Between 9am - 12pm	80 (23)
Between 3pm and 5pm	79 (23)
Between 12pm - 3pm	64 (18)
Before 9am	52 (15)
No/Don't know	46 (13)
After 5pm	15 (4)
First visit	14 (4)
Total	350 (100)

Table 13: Interviewees responses to the particular time of year they tend to visit more

Time of year	Response total (as %)
Equally all year	141 (62)
Summer (June - August)	25 (11)
Spring (March - May)	23 (10)
Don't know / first visit	18 (8)
Autumn (September - November)	16 (7)
Winter (December - February)	6 (3)
Total	229 (100)

Table 14: Response when asked 'Is the time of day you visit this area dependent on the tide?'

Visit dependent on the tide	Response (as %)
No	144 (75)
Yes	38 (20)
Not sure	10 (5)
Total	192 (100)

Mode of transport

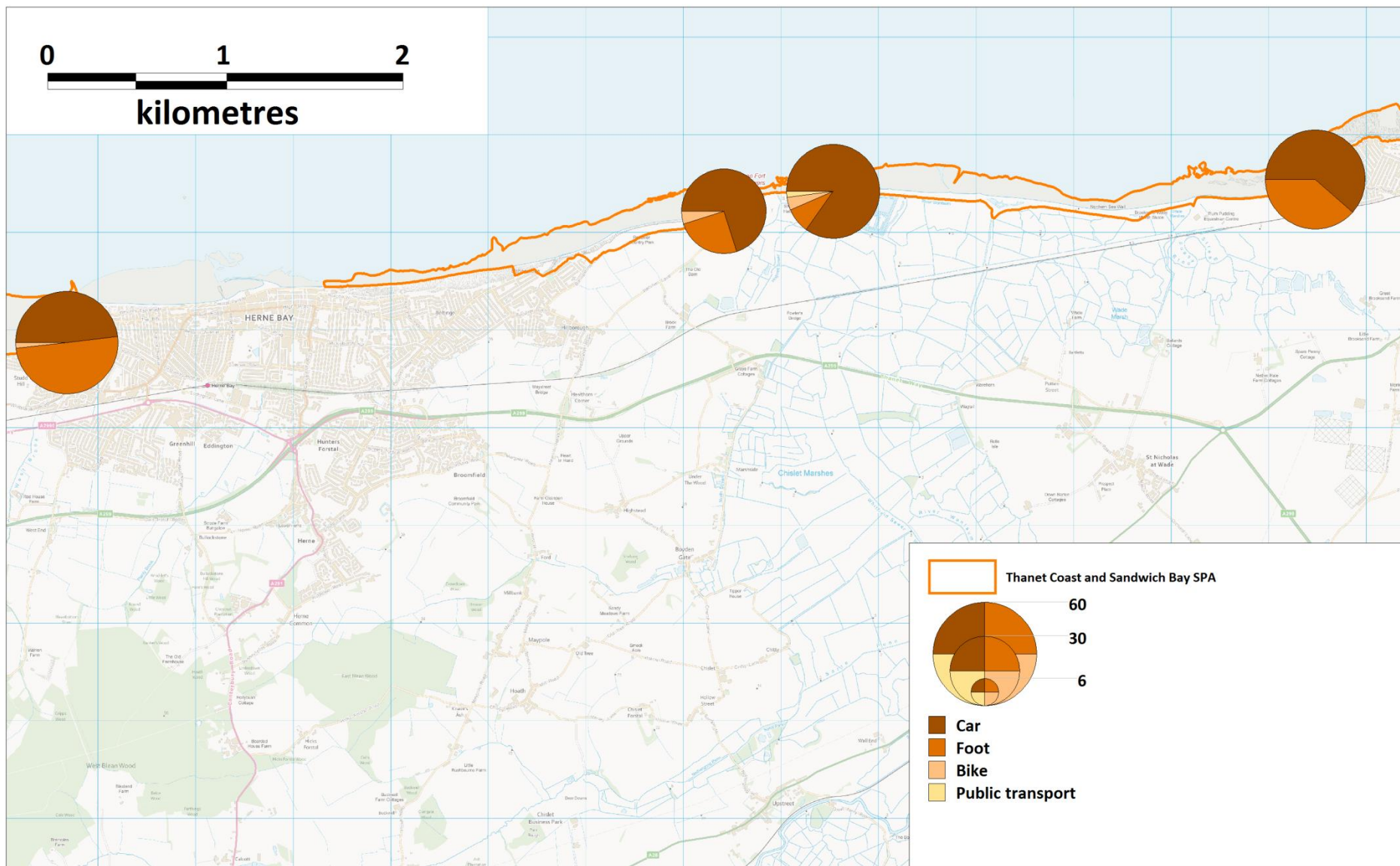
4.12 Visitor groups were asked which mode of transport they used to access the interview location and overall 65% of groups stated they arrived by car/van and 32% of groups arrived by foot (Table 15).

Table 15: Mode of transport used to access site by interviewed group

Transport mode	Response total (as %)
Car/Van	125 (65)
On foot	61 (32)
Bicycle	5 (3)
Public transport	1 (1)
Total	192 (100)

4.13 The proportion of visitor groups arriving at each survey location by different transport modes differed. Nearly half of all visitor groups to location 1 (Hampton Slipway) arrived by car and less than a quarter of visitors to locations 2 and 3 (Reculver) arrived by car (Map 5).

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Map 5: Transport mode used by interviewed visitors to access each location

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Reasons for visiting the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA specifically

- 4.14 Visitor groups were asked specifically why they visited the interview location rather than another local site and visitors were asked to identify which factor was the 'main' reason and had the most influence of their choice of site visit. Overall 42% of visitor groups stated the factor which had the most influence over their choice of site to visit was 'close to home' with 17% of groups stating 'quality of the area/scenery' (Table 16).
- 4.15 In total 57% of visitor groups who cited dog walking as their main activity stated that 'close to home' was the most influential factor over their choice of visit location followed by 'ability to let the dog off the lead' given by 13% of groups (Table 16).

Table 16: Main and other factors which influenced choice of visit destination. All % calculated from column totals.

Main factor which influenced choice of site visit	Main factor (as %)	Main factor cited by groups with dog walking as main activity (as %)	Other factors (as %)
Close to home	66 (42)	55 (57)	104 (16)
Quality of the area / Scenery	27 (17)	11 (11)	79 (12)
To be close to the coast / water	15 (10)	8 (8)	74 (11)
Ability to let dog off lead	13 (8)	13 (13)	61 (9)
Others in party chose	8 (5)		10 (2)
Right place for activity	7 (4)	1 (1)	31 (5)
Habit / Familiarity	6 (4)	3 (3)	49 (8)
Particular wildlife interest	5 (3)		10 (2)
Particular facilities here	3 (2)	1 (1)	11 (2)
Free parking	2 (1)	2 (2)	30 (5)
Good for dog / dog enjoys it	2 (1)	2 (2)	55 (8)
Quiet / No traffic noise	2 (1)	1 (1)	8 (1)
Good / easy parking	1 (1)		46 (7)
Others in party chose	0 (0)		46 (7)
Feels safe	0 (0)		25 (4)
Choice of routes available	0 (0)		3 (0)
Suitability of area given weather conditions	0 (0)		8 (1)
Total	157 (100)	97 (100)	650 (100)

Routes taken within the site

- 4.16 In total 173 visitor routes were digitised and Map 6 shows the extent of the visitor routes along the coastline. On average visitor groups covered a distance of 3.7km during their visit (with valid route data available for 170 visitor routes, Table 17).
- 4.17 The shortest average route (2.0km) was undertaken by those citing 'family outing' as their main activity. Those whose main activity was dog walking on average covered 3.5km with those groups whose main activity was walking had on average slightly longer routes covering 4.1km (Table 17).
- 4.18 The routes taken by visitors were considered in more detail for the three most frequently cited main activities, dog walking, walking and an outing with family, which accounted for 86% (147 of the 170) of all digitised routes. Overall 20% of routes from

Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA Visitor Survey

these groups went onto the beach with the remaining 80% of visitor routes covering some distance along the promenade/cliff edge (Table 18).

- 4.19 In total 67% of routes were undertaken by dog walkers which accounted for half of all routes adjacent to cliff/on the promenade. Of the 20% of visitor routes on the beach, 17% of these were made by dog walkers (Table 18).

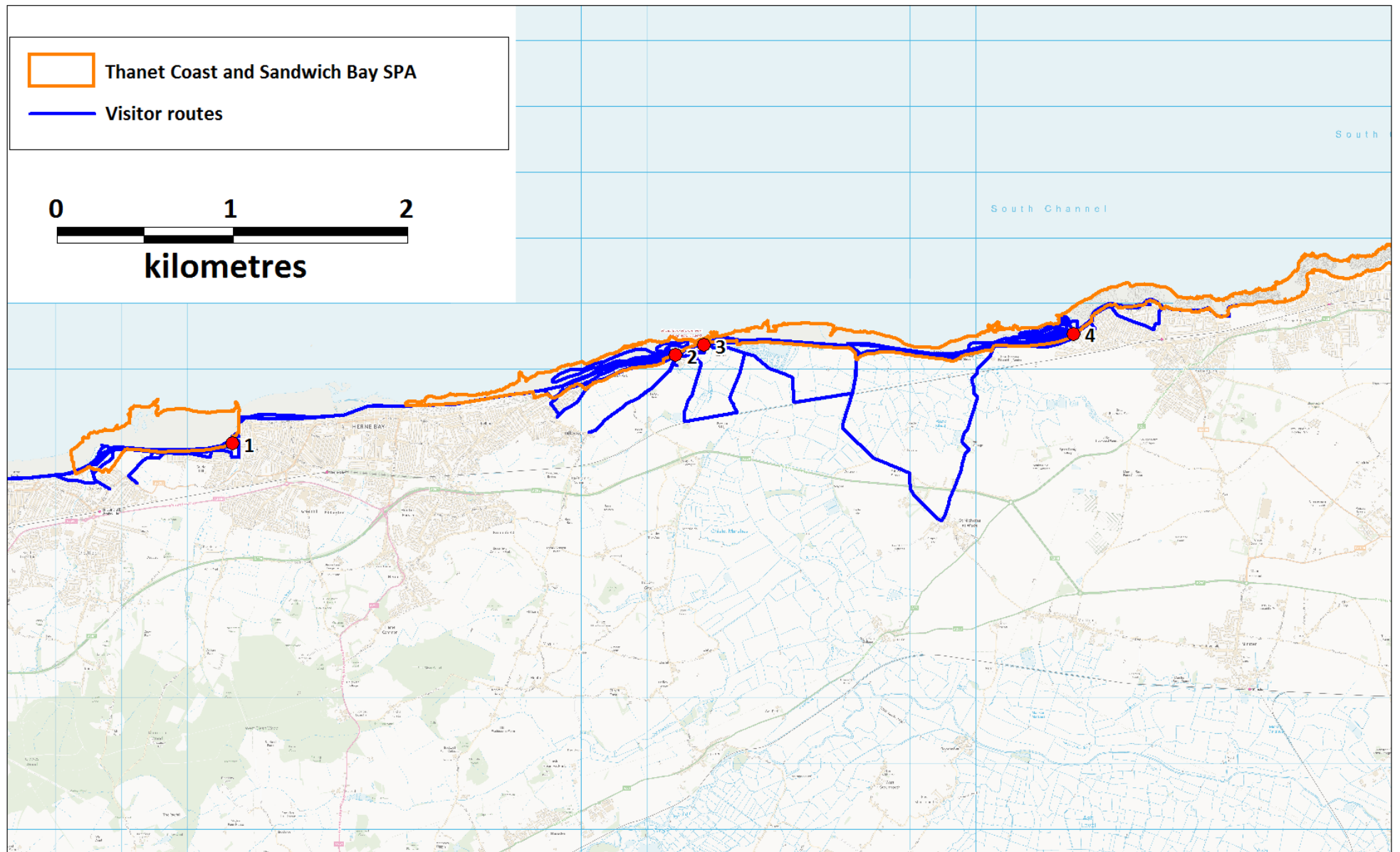
Table 17: Length in km of visitor routes for main activities (undertaken by at least ten interviewed groups in Table 9)

Activity	Count	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Dog walking	99	0.9	11.5	3.5
Walking	40	1.2	15.3	4.1
Outing with family	8	0.9	3.8	2.0
All routes (including all other cited main activities)	170	0.3	16.0	3.7

Table 18: Visitor routes per frequently cited main activity categorised as either those which went onto the beach or remained on the promenade/adjacent to the cliff. % calculated from table total value

Routes	Dog walking (as %)	Walking (as %)	Outing with family (as%)	Total (as%)
On the beach	25 (17)	2 (1)	2 (1)	29 (20)
Adjacent to the cliff/on the promenade	74 (50)	38 (26)	6 (4)	118 (80)
Total	99 (67)	40 (27)	8 (5)	147 (100)

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Map 6: Visitor routes recorded during the 2014 visitor survey

Alternative visit destination

4.20 The 108 visitor groups who had stated dog walking as either a ‘main’ or ‘other’ activity were then asked two additional questions about alternative dog walking sites. These visitor groups were asked ‘if a new dog walking site was provided closer to your home and inland might you have chosen to exercise your dog there?’; the majority (63%) of groups responded ‘perhaps/sometime/maybe’. In total 15% of visitor groups responded ‘yes’ and 22% replied ‘no’ (Table 19).

4.21 Subsequently these groups were then asked about the features they would want to see at a new dog walking site and the most frequently cited response by over half (56%) of all dog walking groups was ‘safe for dog’ closely followed by ‘ability to let the dog of the lead’ (cited by 52%). Other popular features included ‘more dog bins’ (given by 39% of groups), ‘closer to home’ (given by 33% of groups) and ‘more attractive surroundings’ (given by 33% of groups). (Table 20).

Table 19: Visitor responses when asked if an inland new dog walking site was provided might you have chosen to exercise your dog there?

Response	Response total (as %)
Perhaps / Sometimes / Maybe	68 (63)
No	24 (22)
Yes	16 (15)
Total	108 (100)

Table 20: Visitor responses when asked if the council were to create a new location for dog walking at another site, what features would you want to see there?

Feature like to see in new dog walking location	Response (%)
Safe for dog	60 (56)
Ability to let dog off lead	56 (52)
More dog bins	42 (39)
Closer to home	36 (33)
More attractive surroundings	36 (33)
No features / Nothing	22 (20)
Requirement to pick up after dog	19 (18)
Other	18 (17)
Refreshments	14 (13)
Sea views	16 (15)
Measures in place to control other users	10 (9)
Better or easier parking facilities	11 (10)
Better path surfacing / path network	9 (8)
Toilets	9 (8)
No requirement to pick up after dog	3 (3)
More litter bins	4 (4)
Visitor centre	3 (3)
Total	108 (100)

Awareness of Nature Conservation Importance

4.22 Interviewees were asked in question 14 about their awareness of any designations or environmental protection that applies to the coast. Around half of the people were not aware of any designations (Table 21).

Table 21: Responses Q14-Are you aware of any designations or environmental protection

Response	Number of responses (%)
Yes	76 (40)
Unsure	18 (9)
No	98 (51)
Total	192

4.23 Those that were aware of a designation or were asked if they could name it. Around a third (32%) of those who answered “yes” to the first part of the question (i.e. were aware of some designation or protection) could not subsequently name it. Eight respondents (11% of those who were aware of a designation and 4% of all interviewees) were aware that the site was an SPA or was of European importance. A further 13 interviewees (17% of those who were aware of a designation and 7% of all interviewees) were not aware of the SPA designation but knew the coastline was a SSSI.

Visitor postcodes

4.24 From the 192 completed visitor interviews, 87% of visitor groups (166) provided home postcodes which could be geocoded with one respondent not stating whether they were visiting from home/on holiday or staying with family and friends (Map 7). As would be expected, a higher concentration of visitor postcodes from those groups who stated they travelled from home are clustered around the survey locations with the home postcodes of holidaying visitors much further afield. Half of all visitor groups which provided a valid home postcode lived within 4.2km of their interview location and 75% of visitors within 9.8km (Table 22).

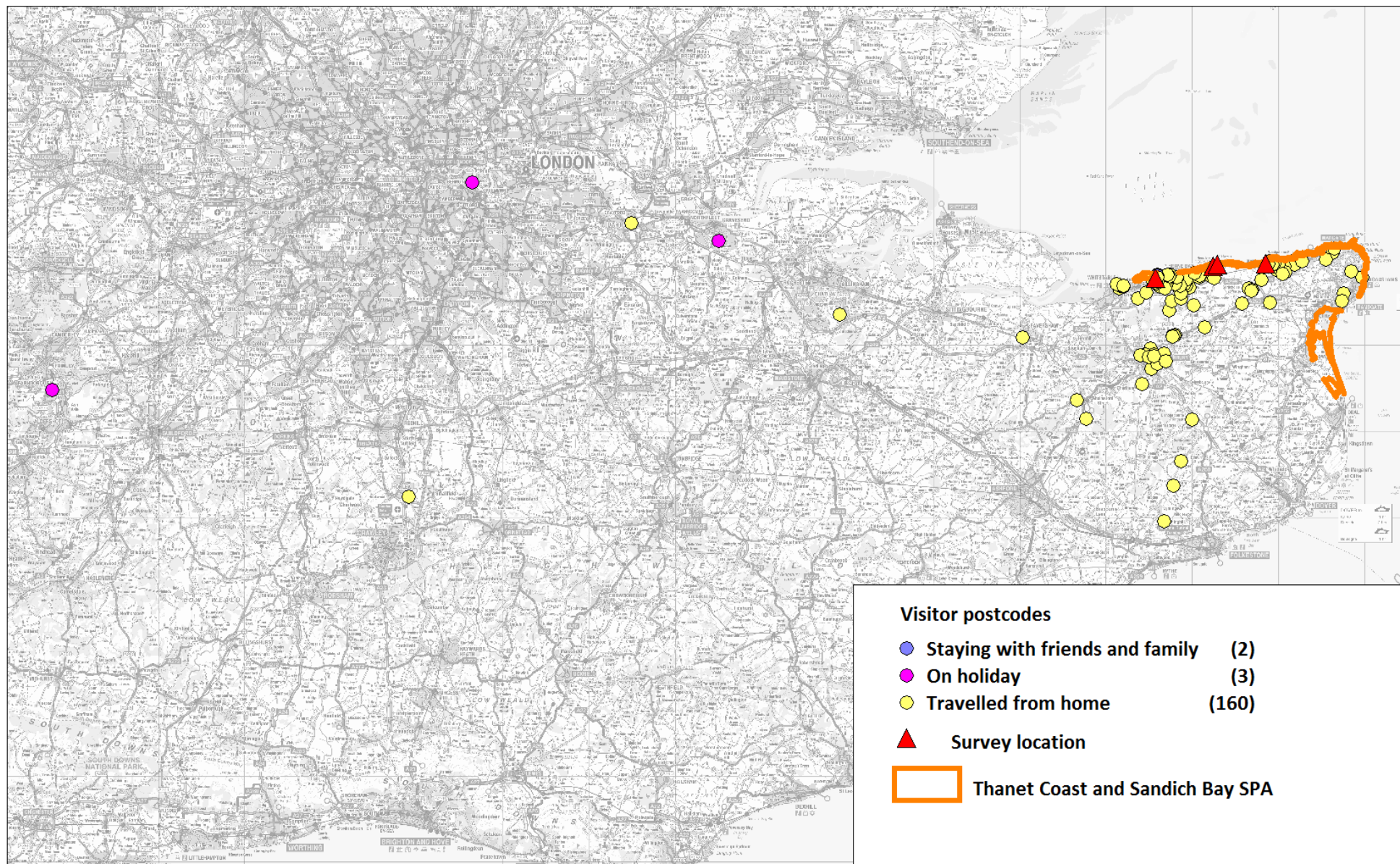
4.25 The home postcode locations of 90 visitor groups which made regular trips (at least once a week) were considered further (Map 8). The main activity of 86% (77) of these groups was dog walking (Map 8). Other regular visitor groups undertook walking, wildlife watching, meeting up with friends and ‘other’ main activities (Map 8). It was the dog walking groups which had the widest geographic spread southerly along the A28 and as far west as Faversham. (Map 8).

4.26 There are clusters of postcodes from regular visitors around survey locations 1 and 4 (Maps 8, 9 and 10) which represent the postcodes of local residents who access the locations on foot. Figure 3 shows the cumulative percentage of regular visitors who arrived at the survey locations by foot against the linear distance between their home postcode and interview location. All regular visitors who arrived by foot lived within 5.0km of their visit destination, 90% lived within 1.8km and half lived within 0.5km (Figure 3 and Table 22).

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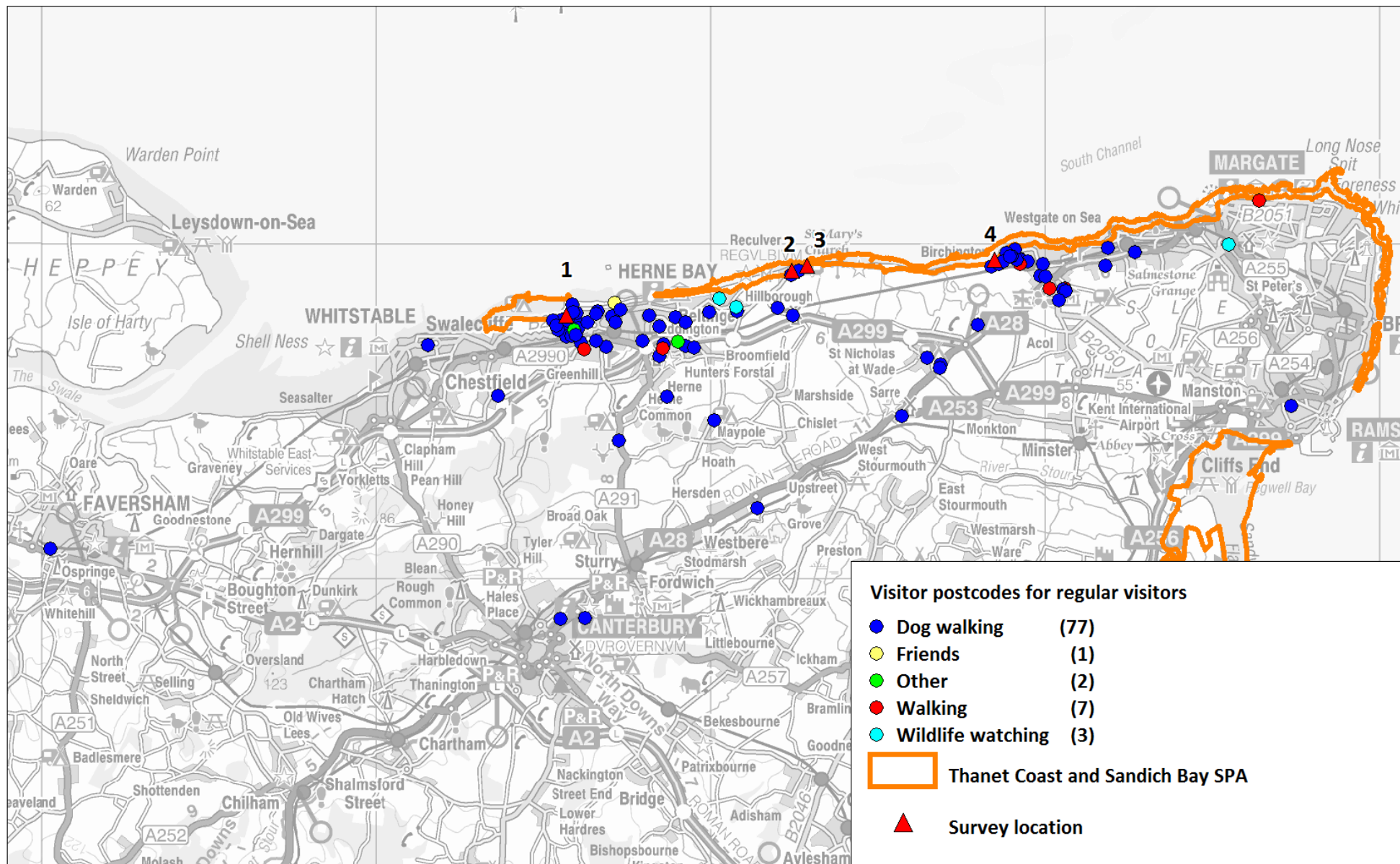
- 4.27 The visitors who lived further away from the site made their trip by car (Map 10) and Figure 4 reflects this increased distance. All of the regular visitors who travelled to site by car lived within 23.6km of their visit destination, 90% lived within 9.8km and half lived within 4.2km (Table 22).

Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA Visitor Survey



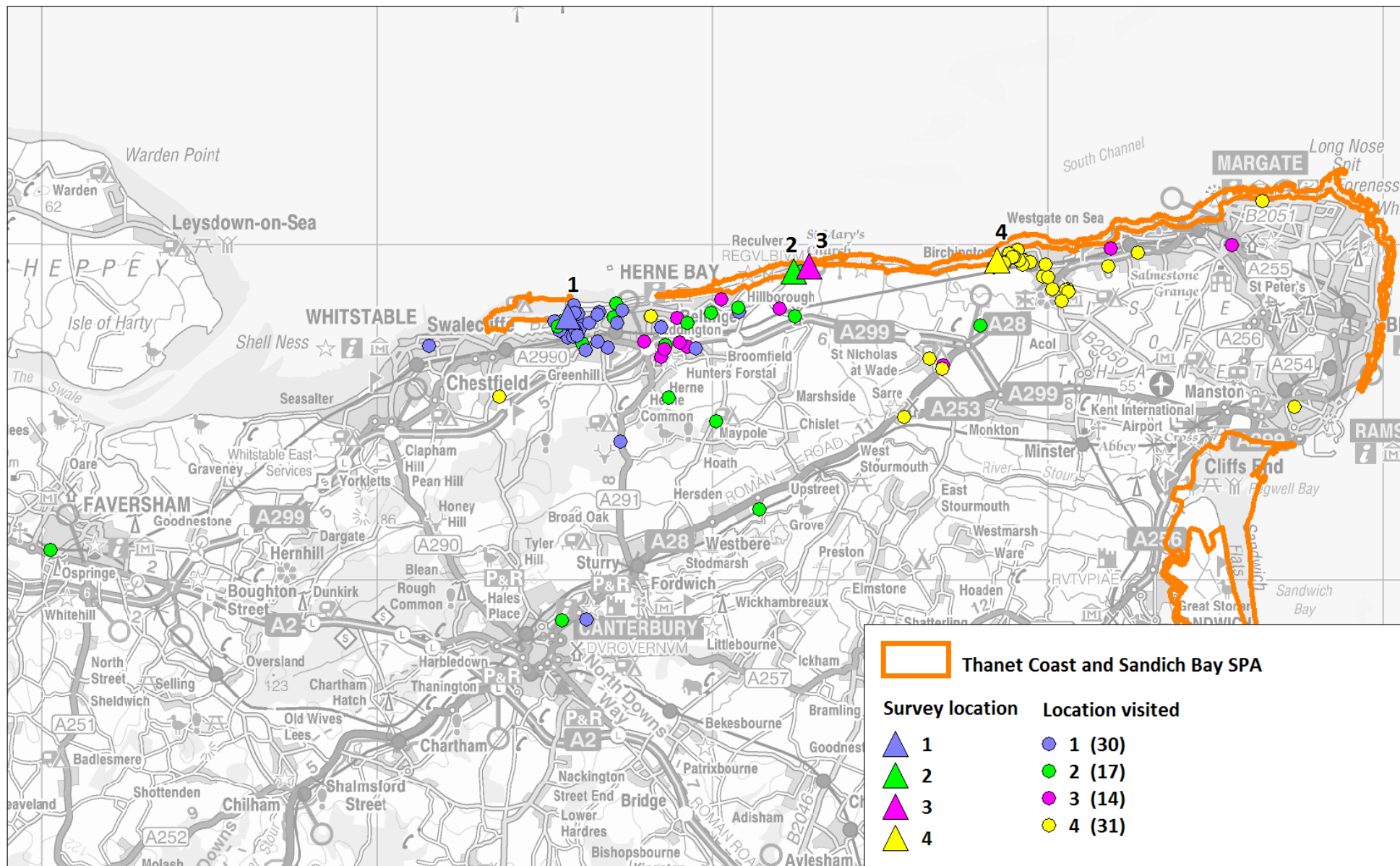
Map 7: All 165 visitor postcodes

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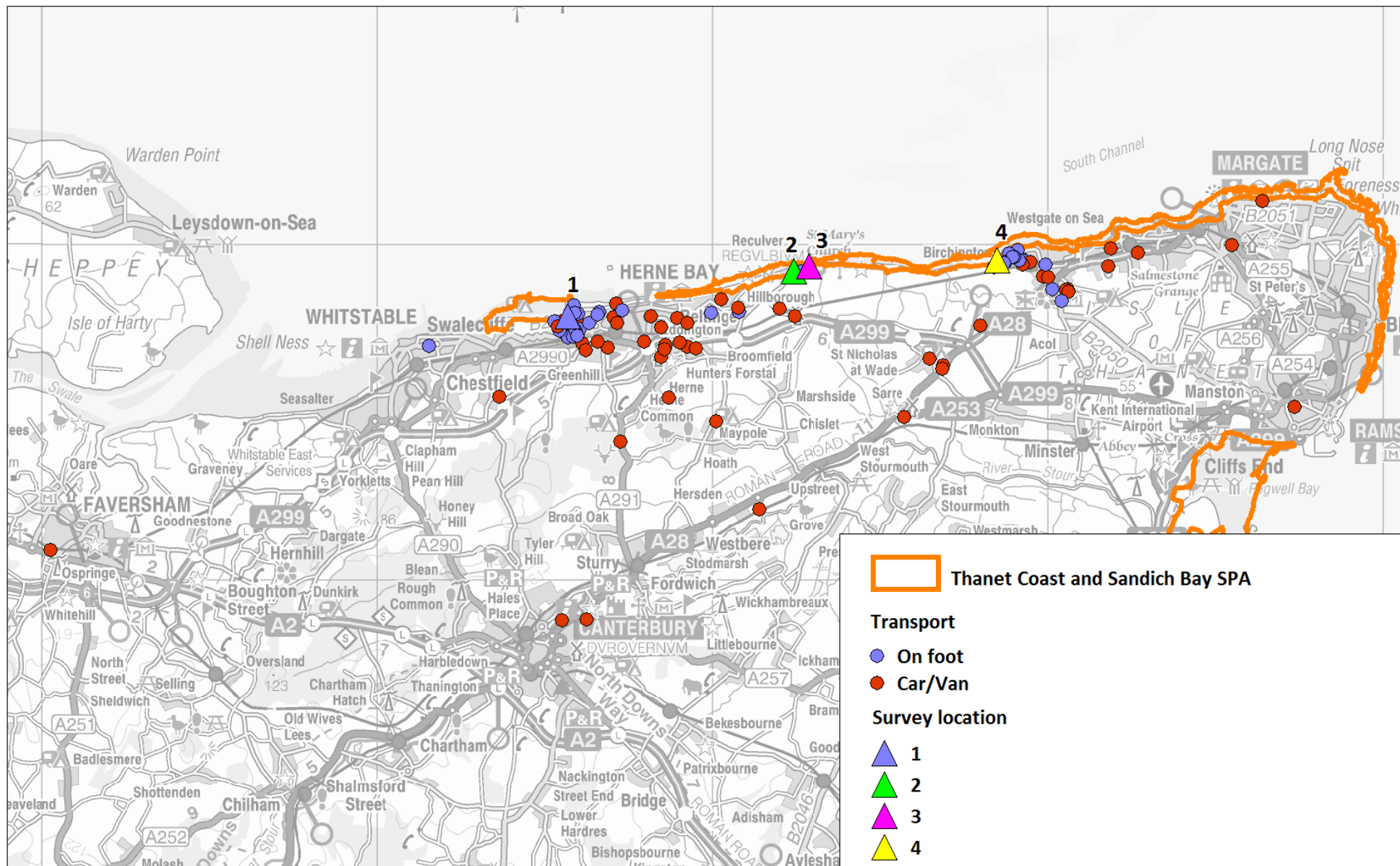
Map 8: Home postcode locations of visitors who make a regular visit of at least once a week

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Map 9: Home postcode locations of visitors who make a regular visit of at least once a week coded by visit location

Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA Visitor Survey



Map 10: Home postcodes locations of visitors who make a regular visit of at least once a week coded by transport mode to site

Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA Visitor Survey

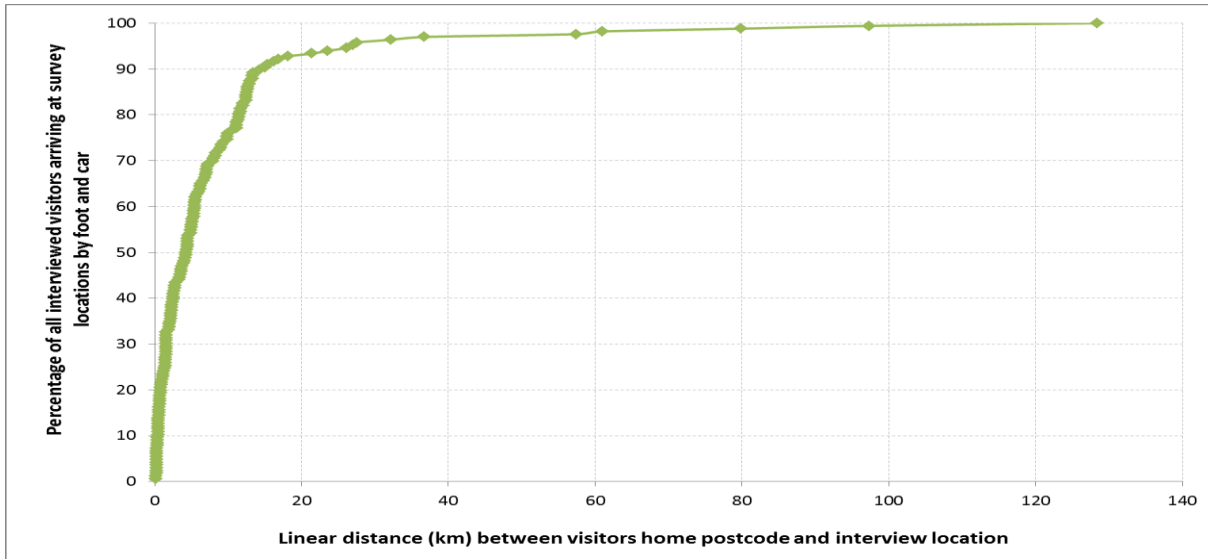


Figure 2: Cumulative frequency plot of all visitor groups and the linear distance between their home postcode and interview location

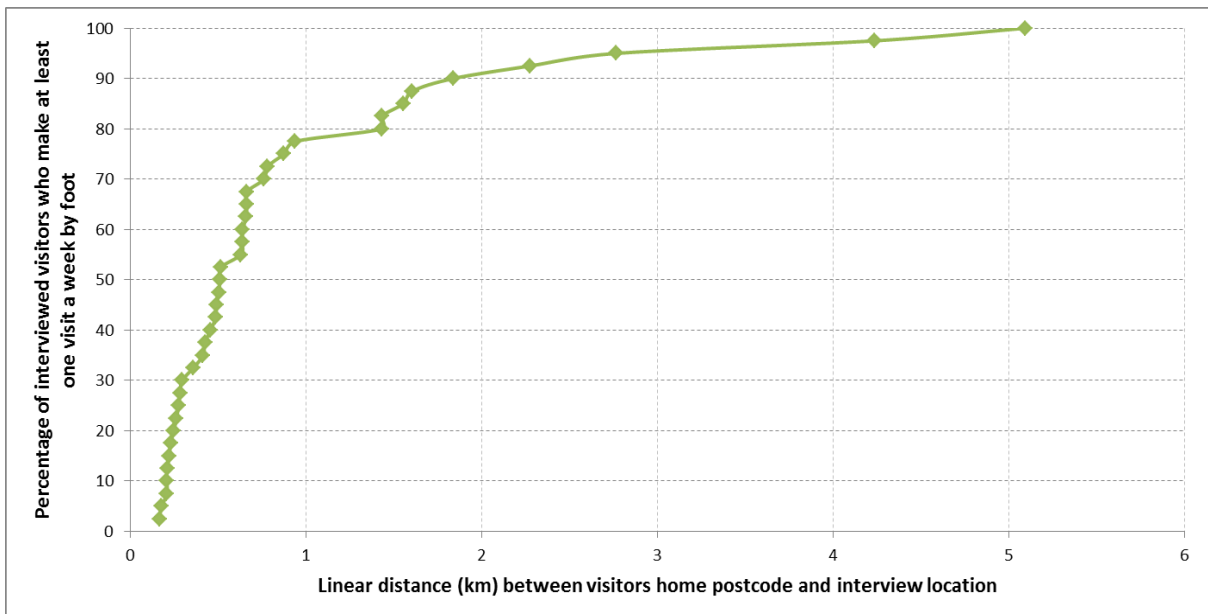


Figure 3: Cumulative frequency plot of respondents who make a visit a least once a week by foot against the linear distance between their home postcode and interview location

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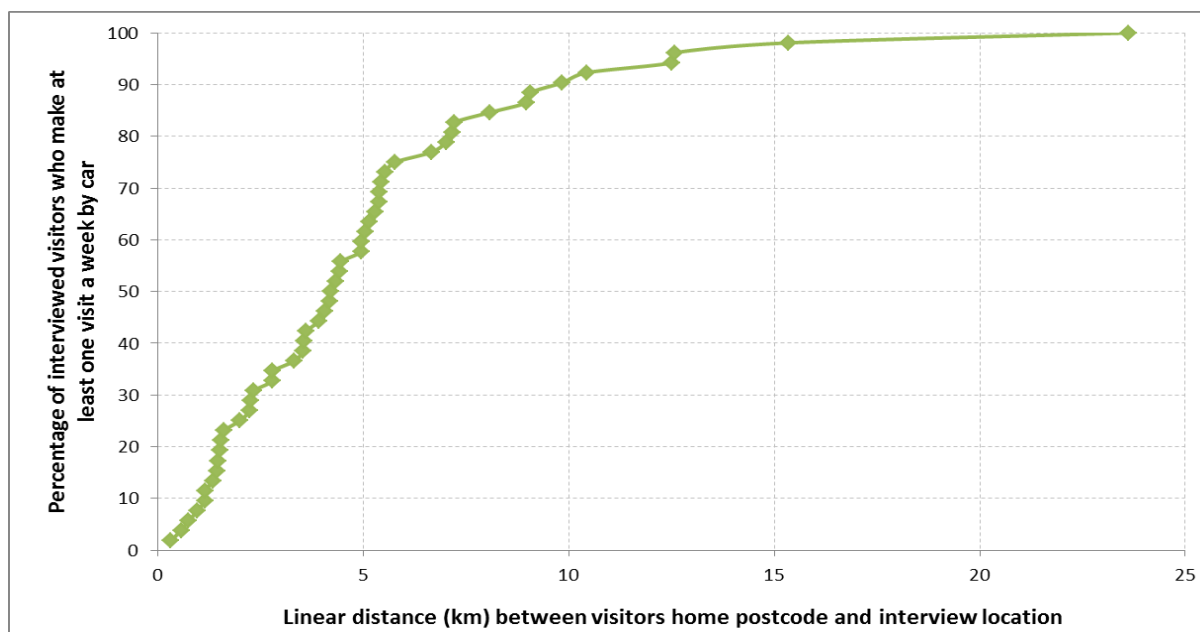


Figure 4: Cumulative frequency plot of respondents who make a visit a least once a week by car against the linear distance between their home postcode and interview location

Table 22: The linear distance (km) from the interview location of a regular visitors home postcode considered for different percentages of regular visitors.

As a % of the total number of regular visitors	All visitors by foot and car	All regular visitors (by foot and car)	Regular visitors by foot	Regular visitors by car
50%	4.2	1.6	0.5	4.2
75%	9.8	4.9	0.9	5.7
90%	15.0	7.2	1.8	9.8
100%	128.4	23.6	5.0	23.6
Number of postcodes	165	92	40	52

Defining a zone of influence

- 4.28 A 'zone of influence' needs to be established in order to inform European site mitigation. The zone of influence is the zone within which it is considered that an impact on European site interest can be identified. It defines the geographical area within which potential impacts need to be avoided or mitigated for, and outside which it can be concluded that significant effects on the European site are unlikely.
- 4.29 Visitor surveys reveal where people who visit the site live, and generally illustrate a core visitor area, with an inevitable small number of 'outliers' where visitors travel further than the majority. European site strategic mitigation schemes for recreational pressure tend to use visitor surveys to define a zone of influence based on 75% of the visitors or a similar approach to identify the core area from which visitors originate.
- 4.30 Once a zone of influence has been defined, local planning authorities are then able to determine the level of new housing that originates within the zone, plan for any measures required to reduce current pressures being exerted from within that zone, and also any measures necessary to prevent further impacts arising from new

residential development. This evidenced based approach to mitigation enables local planning authorities as competent authorities under the European Directives and Habitat Regulations to effectively fulfil their duties relating to the restoration and maintenance of European sites, and their protection from future impacts.

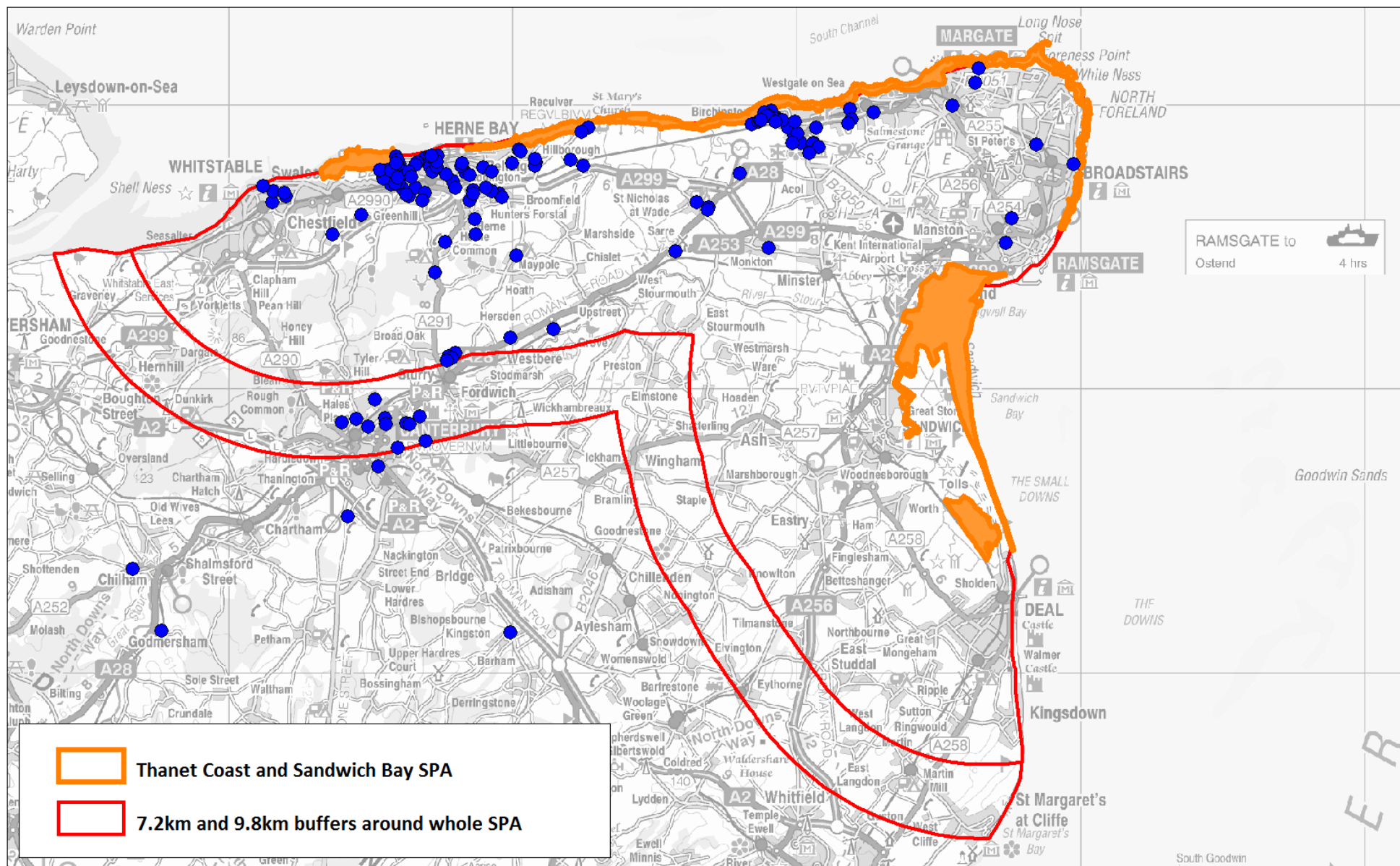
4.31 There is no adopted standardised method to identify a 'zone of influence' as each site and their surrounding physical features differ greatly. The identification of a 'zone of influence' is really an exercise in identifying a boundary which seems pragmatic, representative of visitor patterns to the site, the physical features of the site, infrastructure, current housing distribution and the nature of the surrounding area.

4.32 In terms of selecting criteria to define a zone of influence for Canterbury District, there are several possible options. A zone of influence could be established from the boundary within which 75% of all visitors live (9.8km, Table 22) or the distance at which 75% of all regular visitors reside (4.9km, Table 22). Some sensible options are listed below:

- Derived from the home postcodes of 75% of all visitors (9.8km, Table 22 and Map 11)
- Derived from the home postcodes of 90% of regular visitors who arrive by car (9.8km, Table 22 and Map 11)
- Derived from the postcodes of 90% of all regular visitors (7.2km, Table 22 and Map 11).
- Zone taking the form of a convex hull⁵ around the home postcodes of all regular visitors (Map 12)
- Zone taking the form of a convex hull around the home postcodes of 90% of regular visitors (Map 13)

⁵ The smallest enveloped shape polygon which contains all the postcodes but joining the locations of the outlying postcode points.

Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA Visitor Survey

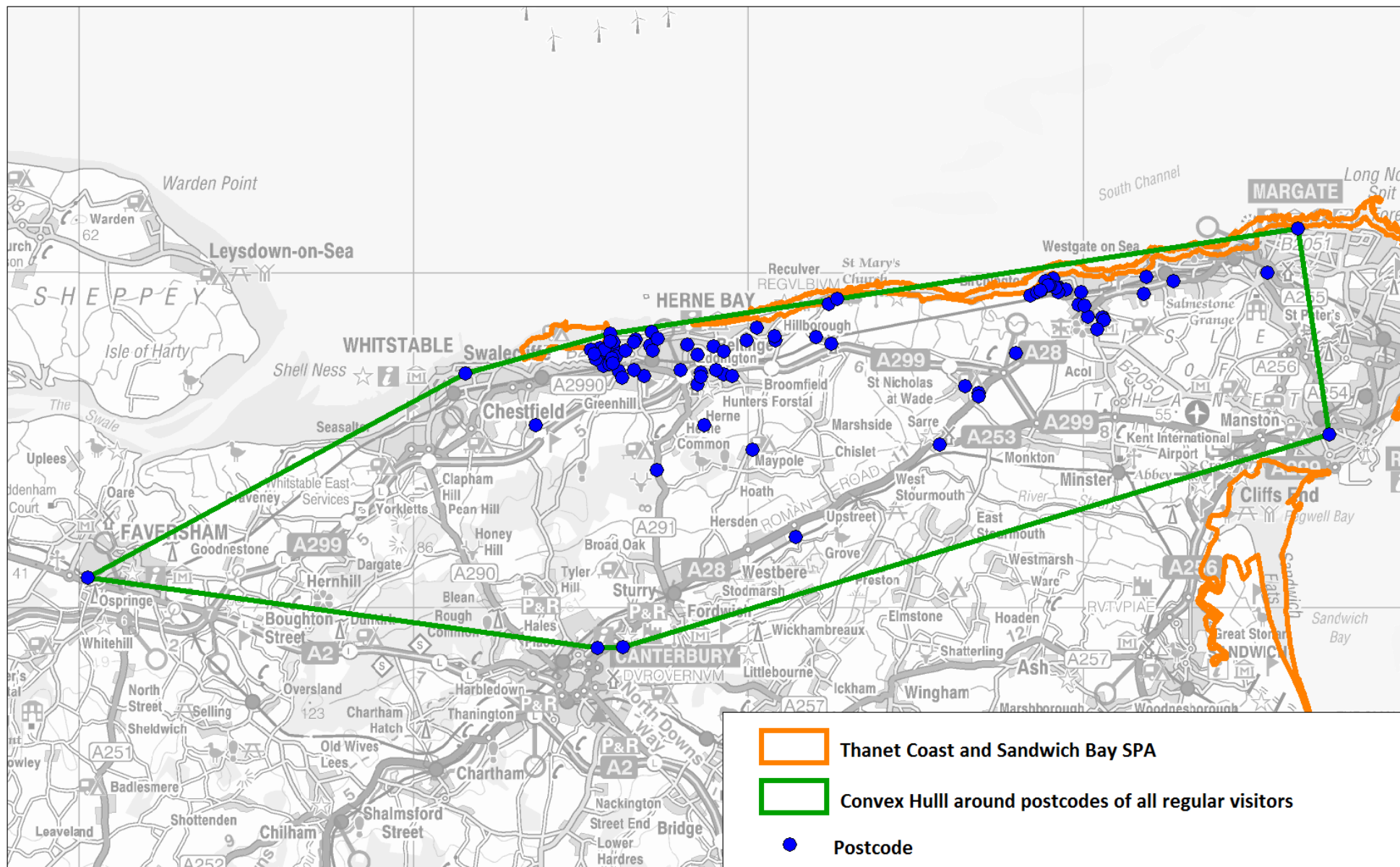


- Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA
- 7.2km and 9.8km buffers around whole SPA

Map 11: Buffers zones around the whole SPA at 7.2km and 9.8km distances - possible options for a 'zone of influence'

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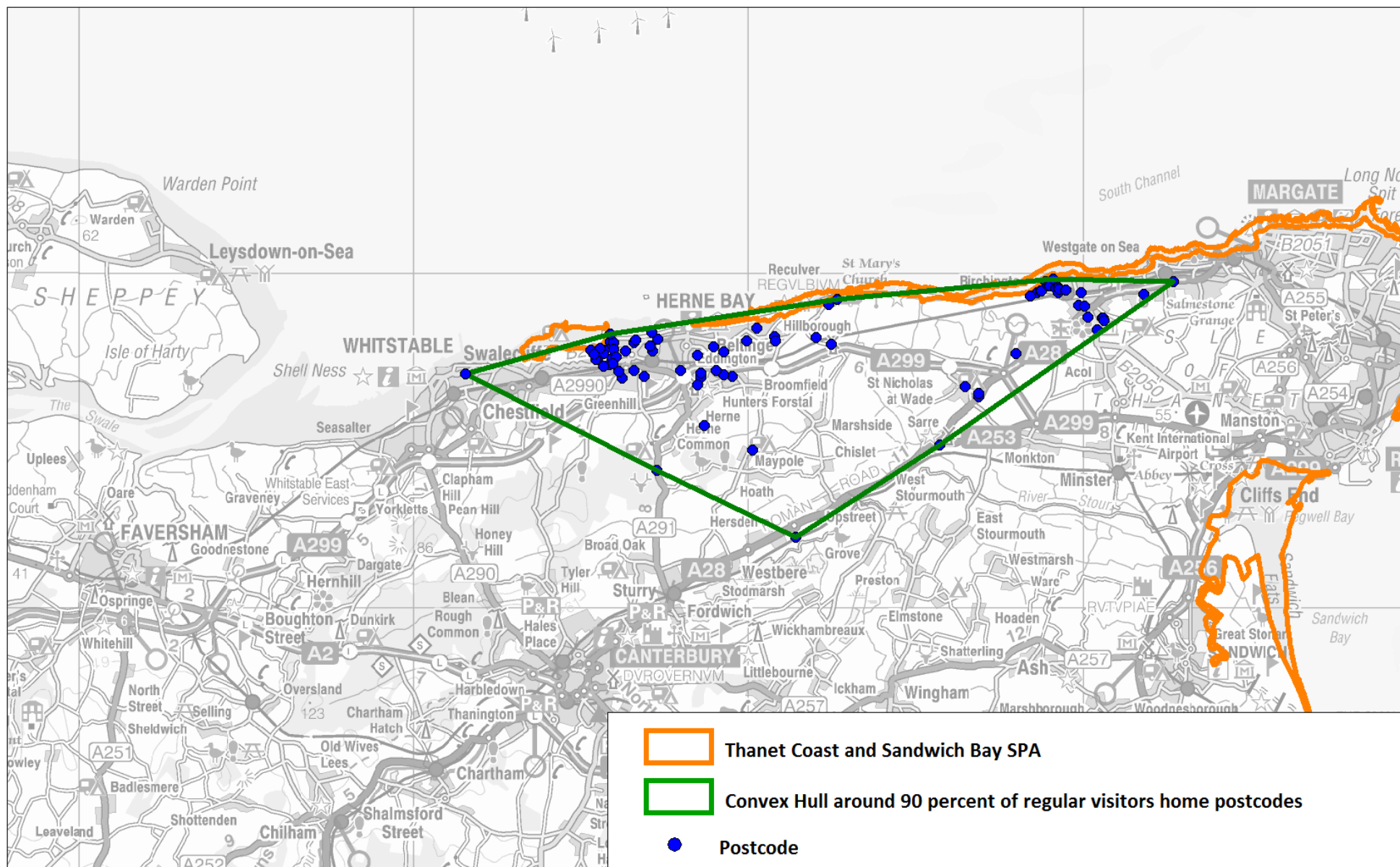
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Map 12: Convex Hull around all postcodes of regular visitors - a possible option for a 'zone of influence'

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Map 13: Convex Hull around all postcodes of regular visitors - a possible option for a 'zone of influence'

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5. Discussion

- 5.1 This survey has focussed on visitor access patterns within the SPA. We make no inference about disturbance, responses of the birds or the impacts of access on the SPA, which are beyond the scope of the report.
- 5.2 Throughout January and February there were a series of depressions moving across southern England and the weather was particularly inclement. This may have influenced people's general access patterns. The February surveys were conducted in a window between the weather fronts, but still included some inclement weather. The weather is likely to have influenced the visitor patterns on the day, the likelihood of people stopping to be interviewed and perhaps more general patterns of access. The March surveys coincided with brighter days and a period of sunshine, and this marked contrast in the weather conditions may account for some of the differences recorded in the visitor patterns between the two pulses of survey work. The bird interest is present in the winter, including March, so the survey periods reflect the time when the birds are present.
- 5.3 The visitor data provides a snapshot of access patterns and provides an evidence base that will inform potential mitigation measures. It is clear that, while the coast has a local draw, visitors at the survey locations do also originate from Canterbury itself and from further afield. We have provided some maps reflecting potential 'zones of influence' and the distances from the SPA within which most visitors live.
- 5.4 The survey results also provide some indication of potential measures that may work for mitigation. A high proportion of visitors (42% of visitor groups) indicated that proximity to home was the factor that had the most influence over their choice of site to visit. Dog walkers in particular selected locations based on their proximity to home. A much smaller number of interviewed groups (17%) identified the 'quality of the area/scenery' as the main factor in their choice of site. This would suggest that there may be some merit in providing dedicated areas for access in the local area, away from the SPA. In order for such locations to work, some measures to deflect access away from the coast (such as increased parking charges, or a requirement to keep dogs on leads) may be necessary.
- 5.5 In order to explore the potential for new greenspace to work as mitigation, dog walking visitors were asked specifically whether they would use a new dog walking site, inland. The majority response (63% of respondents) was ambivalent, suggesting that features such as design, specific location etc. would be important. In total 15% of visitor groups responded 'yes'. This implies a new dog walking site could draw something between 15 and 78% of dog walkers. From the response on features of the new site, sites that are safe for the dog and where the dog can be off the lead are likely to be the most successful.

Appendix 1: Survey Questionnaire

Thanet Coast & Sandwich Bay SPA Visitor Survey

Good am/pm. Please could you spare me a few minutes to take part in a short survey about your visit here today. The survey has been commissioned by Canterbury City Council in order to understand visitor access patterns and inform future management of this site.



Which of the following best describes your situation today? *Read list, single response only.*

- On a day trip/short visit and travelled from home
- On a day trip/short visit and staying with friends/family
- On holiday in the area
- Other, please detail

Further details:

Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA Visitor Survey

What activities are you undertaking today? Do not prompt. Tick ALL responses given by respondent. Then ask Which would you say is the main activity you are undertaking today? Tick only one main activity.

	Activities	Main Activity
Dog walking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jogging/Power walking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outing with family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wildlife watching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enjoying scenery	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Photography	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Watersports/Swimming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fishing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting up with friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other, please detail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Further details:

Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA Visitor
Survey

How long have you spent / will you spend in the area today? *Single response only. Do not prompt.*

- Less than 30 minutes
- Between 30 and 59 minutes
- Between 1 hour and 1 hour, 59 minutes
- Between 2 hours and 2 hours, 59 minutes
- More than 3 hours

Over the past year, roughly how often have you visited this area? *Tick closest answer. Single response only. Prompt only if interviewee struggles, don't use numbers.*

- Daily
- Most days (180+ visits)
- 1 to 3 times a week (40-180 visits)
- 2 to 3 times per month (15-40 visits)
- Once a month (6-15 visits)
- Less than once a month (2-5 visits)
- Sporadically / Don't know
- First visit

Do you tend to visit this area at a certain time of day for [insert given activity]? *Tick closest answer. Multiple responses ok. Do not prompt.*

- Before 9am
- Between 9am and 12
- Between 12 and 3pm
- Between 3 and 5pm
- After 5pm
- No/Don't know
- First visit

Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA Visitor Survey

Is the time of day that you visit this area dependent on the tide? *Single response only.*

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Further details of tide state:

Do you tend to visit this area more at a particular time of year for [insert given activity]? *Multiple responses ok. Do not prompt.*

- Spring (Mar-May)
- Summer (June-Aug)
- Autumn (Sept-Nov)
- Winter (Dec-Feb)
- Equally all year
- Don't know / First visit

How did you get here today? What form of transport did you use? *Tick closest answer. Single response only.*

- Car/Van
- On foot
- Public transport
- Bicycle
- Other, please detail

Further details:

Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA Visitor Survey

What makes you come here specifically, rather than another local site? Tick all responses given in 'other' column. Do not prompt. Then ask What would you say had the most influence over your choice of site to visit today? Tick only one response under the 'main' column. Tick closest answer.

	Other	Main
Close to home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others in party chose	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good / easy parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Free parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feels safe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Particular facilities here	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Choice of routes available	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of the area / Scenery	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Habit / Familiarity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Right place for activity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Particular wildlife interest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good for dog / dog enjoys it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to let dog off lead	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To be close to the coast / water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suitability of area given weather conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quiet / No traffic noise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other, please detail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Further details:	<input type="text"/>	

Now I would like to ask you about your route today. Looking at the area shown on the map, can you show me where you started your visit today, the finish point and your route taken please? *Probe to ensure the route is accurately documented. Use **P** to indicate where the visitor parked, **E** to indicate the start point and **X** to indicate the exit point. Mark the route with a line; a solid line for actual route taken and a dotted line for the expected or remaining route.*

Is / was your route today reflective of your usual route when you visit here for [insert given activity]? *Tick closest answer. Do not prompt. Single response only.*

- Shorter than normal
- Normal
- Longer than normal
- No typical visit
- First visit

What, if anything, influenced your choice of route here today? *Multiple responses ok. Do not prompt. Tick closest answers. Use free text box to provide additional details.*

- Weather
- Daylight
- Time
- Tide
- Other people
- Group members (kids, less able etc)
- Muddy tracks / paths
- Followed a marked route
- Previous knowledge of area
- Activity undertaken
- Interpretation available (maps etc)
- Nothing
- Other, please detail:

Further details:

Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA Visitor Survey

If a new dog walking site was provided closer to your home and inland, might you have chosen to exercise your dog there, rather than coming here? *Single response only, do not prompt.*

- Yes
- Perhaps / Sometimes / maybe
- No

If the council were to create a new location for dog walking at another site, what features would you want to see there? *Multiple responses ok. Prompt if necessary with **What would make your ideal dog walking site?***

- No features / Nothing
- More dog bins
- Safe for dog
- Ability to let dog off lead
- No requirement to pick up after dog
- Requirement to pick up after dog
- Better path surfacing / path network
- More litter bins
- Refreshments (cafe/pubs etc)
- Visitor centre
- Measures in place to control other users
- Toilets
- Better or easier parking facilities
- Closer to home
- More attractive surroundings
- Sea views
- Other, please detail

Further details:

Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA Visitor
Survey

Are you aware of any designations or environmental protection that applies to the Thanet Coast. *Single response only.*

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If yes, can you name the designation? *Do not prompt. Multiple responses ok.*

- SSSI mentioned
- SPA / European site mentioned
- General comment about importance for birds
- No clear response / not able to name

Do you have any comments about your visit and access to this area?

Finally, so that we can check that we have a representative sample, please could you answer the following questions.

What is your full home postcode? *(this is the most important piece of information required from the survey, please make every effort to record correctly).*

If visitor is unable or refuses to give postcode: **What is the name of the nearest village / town?**

If visitor is on holiday ask: **Which village / town are you staying in?**

How many people in your party fall into the following age categories? Enter the number of people per category.

24 or under	<input type="text"/>
25 - 35	<input type="text"/>
36 - 45	<input type="text"/>
46 - 55	<input type="text"/>
56 - 65	<input type="text"/>
66+	<input type="text"/>

Thank you very much for your time

Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA Visitor Survey

To be completed by surveyor when the survey has finished

Route mapped?

- Yes
- No

Surveyor initials	<input type="text"/>
Month	<input type="text"/>
Day	<input type="text"/>
Hour	<input type="text"/>
Minute	<input type="text"/>
Survey Location	<input type="text"/>
Gender of respondent	<input type="text"/>
Total number in interviewed group	<input type="text"/>
Total males	<input type="text"/>
Total females	<input type="text"/>
Total dogs	<input type="text"/>
Total dogs off lead	<input type="text"/>