



# England Coast Path Stretch: Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry

## Report SGF 3: Priory Park to Shore Lane, Nacton

### Part 3.1: Introduction

Start Point:	Priory Park (Grid reference TM1940 4004)
End Point:	Shore Lane (Grid reference TM2195 3907)
Relevant Maps:	SGF 3a to SGF 3b

3.1.1 This is one of a series of linked but legally separate reports published by Natural England under section 51 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, which make proposals to the Secretary of State for improved public access along and to this stretch of coast between Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry.

3.1.2 This report covers length SGF 3 of the stretch, which is the coast between Priory Park to Shore Lane, Nacton. It makes free-standing statutory proposals for this part of the stretch, and seeks approval for them by the Secretary of State in their own right under section 52 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

3.1.3 The report explains how we propose to implement the England Coast Path (“the trail”) on this part of the stretch, and details the likely consequences in terms of the wider ‘Coastal Margin’ that will be created if our proposals are approved by the Secretary of State. Our report also sets out:

- any proposals we think are necessary for restricting or excluding coastal access rights to address particular issues, in line with the powers in the legislation; and
- any proposed powers for the trail to be capable of being relocated on particular sections (“roll-back”), if this proves necessary in the future because of coastal change.

3.1.4 There is also a single Overview document for the whole of this stretch of coast, explaining common principles and background. **This and the other individual reports relating to the stretch should be read in conjunction with the Overview. The Overview explains, among other things, how we have considered any potential environmental impacts of improving public access to this part of the coast, and this report, and other separately published assessments we refer to, then provides more detail on these aspects where appropriate.**

## Part 3.2: Proposals Narrative

### The trail:

Creates a new walked route, along all of this length.

3.2.1 Mainly follows the coastline quite closely and maintains good views of the sea.

3.2.2 Includes 16 sections of new path, from Priory Park to the eastern point of the historic oyster bed on Orwell Park Estate. See maps 3a and 3b and associated tables below for details.

3.2.3 Passes through land that is excepted land under Schedule 1 to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 by virtue of it being land used as a park or garden (route sections SGF-3-S012 to SGF-3-S019). The owner has agreed in writing to dedicate as coastal margin, if this report is approved, an access strip along the proposed route through the Orwell Park Estate. The dedication would remove the excepted land status of this strip and enable coastal access rights to come into effect along it.

### Protection of the environment:

In this part of the report, we explain how we have taken account of environmental protection objectives in developing our proposals for improved coastal access.

3.2.4 The following designated sites affect this length of coast:

- Stour and Orwell Estuaries SPA
- Orwell Estuary SSSI
- Stour and Orwell Estuaries Ramsar

Map D in the Overview shows the extent of designated areas listed

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

#### 3.2.5 Measures to protect the environment

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Design features of the access proposals	Reason included
SGF 3a	SGF-3-S005 to SGF-3-S009	<p>The following design features are described elsewhere in this report:</p> <p>The trail at Mansbrook Grove is aligned inland away from the shore. New bridges and boardwalks will be provided passing on drier ground, behind vegetation and away from the shore where the existing informal access is both restricted by higher tides and passes across wet ground.</p>	<p>This creates a more accessible trail for users with the added benefit of preventing disturbance to birds using the freshwater outlet into the estuary.</p>

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Design features of the access proposals	Reason included
<b>SGF 3a and 3b</b>	SGF-3-001 to SGF-3-025FP	<p>The following design features are described elsewhere in this report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coastal access rights would be excluded under S25A over the saltmarshes marshes and mudflat (see para 3.2.12 – 3.2.13 and Overview Map E).</li> </ul>	The coastal access rights restriction is primarily to protect the public from the inherently dangerous saltmarsh and flats of the area. This safety restriction has the added benefit of protecting the habitat and birds that use it from disturbance.

3.2.6 Natural England is satisfied that the proposals for coastal access in this report are made in accordance with relevant environmental protection legislation. For more information about how we came to this conclusion; see the following assessments of the access proposals that we have published separately:

- A Habitats Regulations Assessment relating to any potential impact on the conservation objectives of European sites.
- Our Nature Conservation Assessment, in which we document our conclusions in relation to other potential impacts on nature conservation.

**Part 6b of the Overview includes some contextual information about protecting the environment along this length of coast.**

### **Accessibility:**

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

The trail would follow an uneven grass or bare soil path in wooded areas and land adjacent to the shore. It may also be necessary to bridge or culvert ditches.

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

### **Where we have proposed exercising statutory discretions:**

3.2.8 **Estuary:** This report proposes that the trail should contain sections aligned on the estuary of the River Orwell, extending upstream from the open coast. Natural England proposes to exercise its functions as if the sea included the estuarial waters of that river as far as The Orwell Bridge as indicated by the extent of the trail shown on map(s) 3a and 3b and map A in the Overview.

**See part 5 of the Overview for a detailed analysis of the options considered for the Orwell Estuary and our resulting proposals.**

3.2.9 **Landward boundary of coastal margin:** We have used our discretion on some sections of the route to map the landward extent of the coastal margin to an adjacent physical boundary such as a fence line, pavement or track to make the extent of the new access rights clearer. See Table 3.3.1 below.

3.2.10 The Proposals Tables show where we are proposing to alter the default landward boundary of the coastal margin. These proposals are set out in columns 5b and 5c of table 3.3.1. Where these columns are left blank, we are making no such proposals, so the default landward boundary applies. See the note relating to Columns 5b & 5c [above Table 3.3.1] explaining what this means in practice.

**See also part 3 of the Overview - 'Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps', for a more detailed explanation of the default extent of the coastal margin and how we may use our discretion to adjust the margin, either to add land or to provide clarity.**

## Restrictions and exclusions

3.2.11 We have proposed to exclude restrict access by direction under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) in certain places along this section of coast.

*Exclusion of access to the saltmarsh/flat at the Orwell Estuary.*

3.2.12 Access to the saltmarsh/flat in the coastal margin seaward of route sections SGF-3-S001 to SGF-3-S025 FP is to be excluded all year-round by direction under S25A of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) as it is unsuitable for public access. The exclusion does not affect the route itself and will have no legal effect on land where coastal access rights do not apply. See map E in the Overview for further detail.

3.2.13 The S25A restriction is used where it is considered that saltmarsh and flats are unsuitable for public access, notwithstanding any locally tolerated access. Safety is considered as part of the assessment along with the nature of the terrain and any natural risks that exist such as soft mud, hidden channels, potential to be trapped by rising tides, and suitability for walking. The intention is to prevent those who may be unfamiliar with the risks from using such areas.

- The areas of saltmarsh subject to regular tidal inundation, and are generally uneven and wet underfoot, incised with creeks and channels, some of which would not be readily apparent to walkers.
- The areas of flat are predominantly soft mud at low tide that is difficult to walk on, which becomes inundated when the tide rises.

3.2.14 Whilst the flats are predominantly muddy, they are interspersed with firmer areas of shingle and sand. The flats can also have pockets of very soft mud where bait digging holes have refilled. Firmer areas along the shoreline that are traditionally used as beaches are not excluded under S25A:

- Upper parts of the Shore from Priory Park to Shore Lane

3.2.15 These directions will not prevent or affect:

- any existing local use of the land by right: such use is not covered by coastal access rights;
- any other use people already make of the land locally by formal agreement with the landowner, or by informal permission or traditional toleration; or
- use of any registered rights of common or any rights at common law or by Royal Charter etc.

Any such use is not prohibited or limited by these arrangements.

3.2.16 The directions we give are intended to avoid any new public rights being created over the area in question in view of the hidden dangers to which new users of the land would be subject because of the local patterns of tidal inundation, extensive mudflats and areas of soft mud.

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

## Coastal erosion

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

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

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

3.2.18 Column 4 of tables 3.3.1 indicates where roll-back has been proposed in relation to a route section. Where this is the case, the route, as initially determined at the time the report was prepared, is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps SGF 3a to SGF 3b as the proposed route of the trail.

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

## Other future change:

3.2.20 At the time of proposal there is existing pedestrian access on the Orwell Bridge, including the route of the promoted Stour and Orwell Walk. Should there be any change in the future and pedestrian access altered Natural England will work with Highways England and all other authorities to review its trail alignment and, if appropriate, will prepare a separate variation report to the Secretary of State to ensure an uninterrupted journey for this part of the coast.

**See parts 7 - 'Future changes' of the Overview for more information.**

## Establishment of the trail:

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

Establishment works will only start on this length of coast once these proposals have been approved by the Secretary of State. The works may therefore either precede or follow the start of establishment works on other lengths of coast within the stretch, and detailed in their separate reports.

3.2.22 Our estimate of the capital costs for physical establishment of the trail on the proposed route is £39,828 and is informed by:

- information already held by the access authority, Suffolk County Council.
- the conclusions of our deliberations in relation to potential impacts on the environment; and
- information gathered while visiting affected land and talking to the people who own and manage it about the options for the route.

3.2.23 The main elements to the overall cost are:

- A significant number of new signs would be needed on the trail.
- New fencing will be installed alongside the trail at sensitive locations and along sections at Orwell Park.
- The surfaces and access furniture of the existing paths and footways on the proposed route are generally of a suitable standard for the trail, but there are some places where new sleeper bridges, footbridges, boardwalks and culverts (TBC) would enhance the convenience of the trail. More significant items of establishment works are shown on the relevant maps accompanying this report.

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

**Table 1: Estimate of capital costs**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Signs & interpretation	£7,973
Steps	£575
Boardwalks	£12,000
Bridges	£3,400
Fencing	£11,550
Gates	£1,000
Clearance	£3,200
Surfacing and traffic management	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>£39,828 (Exclusive of any VAT payable)</b>

3.2.24 Once the Secretary of State's decision on our report has been notified, and further to our conversations with land managers during the route planning stage, Suffolk County Council will liaise with affected land owners and occupiers about relevant aspects of the design, installation and maintenance of the new signs and infrastructure that are needed on their land. Prior to works being carried out on the ground, all necessary permissions, authorisations and consents will be obtained. All such works would conform to the published standards for National Trails and the other criteria described in our Coastal Access Scheme.

Fencing and culverts and other items as jointly agreed necessary by the estate and Natural England will be installed on land owned by the Orwell Park Estate as part of the route alignment and dedication. Precise requirements will be determined during establishment of the trail.

#### **Maintenance of the trail:**

3.2.25 Because the trail on this length of coast will form part of the National Trail being created around the whole coast of England called the England Coast Path, we envisage that it will be maintained to the same high quality standards as other National Trails in England (see The New Deal; Management of National Trails in England from April 2013: details at Annex A of the Overview).

3.2.26 We estimate that the annual cost to maintain the trail will be £1,191.03 (exclusive of any VAT payable). In developing this estimate we have taken account of the formula used to calculate Natural England's contribution to the maintenance of other National Trails.

## Part 3.3: Proposals Tables

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

### 3.3.1 Section Details – Map(s) SGF 3a to SGF 3b: Priory Park to Shore Lane, Nacton

Key notes on table:

1. Column 2 – an asterisk (\*) against the route section number means see also table 3.3.2: Other options considered.
2. Column 4 – ‘No’ means no roll-back is proposed for this route section. ‘Yes – normal’ means roll-back is proposed and is likely to follow the current feature (e.g. cliff edge/beach) for the foreseeable future as any coastal change occurs.
3. Column 4 – ‘Yes – see table 3.3.3’ means roll-back is proposed, but refer to that table below about our likely approach to implementing it for this route section. This is because a more complex situation exists in this case and consideration must be given to how roll-back may happen in relation to excepted land, a protected site etc.
4. Column 5a - Certain coastal land types are included automatically in the coastal margin where they fall landward of the trail if they touch it at some point. The relevant land type (foreshore, cliff, bank, barrier, dune, beach, flat or section 15 land – see Glossary) is shown in this column where appropriate. “No” means none present on this route section.
5. Columns 5b and 5c – Any entry in these columns means we are proposing to align the landward boundary of the coastal margin on this route section with the physical feature(s) shown in 5b, for the reason in 5c. No text here means that for this route section the landward edge of the margin would be that of the trail itself - or if any default coastal land type is shown in 5a, that would be its landward boundary instead.

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Current status of route section(s)	Roll-back proposed? (See Part 7 of Overview)	Landward margin contains coastal land type?	Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary proposal	Explanatory notes
SGF 3a	SGF-3-S001*	Not an existing walked route	Yes - See table 3.3.3	No			
SGF 3a	SGF-3-S002*	Not an existing walked route	Yes - See table 3.3.3	No			
SGF 3a	SGF-3-S003*	Not an existing walked route	Yes - See table 3.3.3	No			

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
<b>Map(s)</b>	<b>Route section number(s)</b>	<b>Current status of route section(s)</b>	<b>Roll-back proposed? (See Part 7 of Overview)</b>	<b>Landward margin contains coastal land type?</b>	<b>Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin (See maps)</b>	<b>Reason for landward boundary proposal</b>	<b>Explanatory notes</b>
SGF 3a	SGF-3-S004*	Not an existing walked route	Yes - See table 3.3.3	No			
SGF 3a	SGF-3-S005*	Not an existing walked route	Yes - See table 3.3.3	No			
SGF 3a	SGF-3-S006*	Not an existing walked route	Yes - See table 3.3.3	No			
SGF 3a	SGF-3-S007*	Not an existing walked route	Yes - See table 3.3.3	No			
SGF 3a	SGF-3-S008*	Not an existing walked route	Yes - See table 3.3.3	No			
SGF 3a	SGF-3-S009*	Not an existing walked route	Yes - See table 3.3.3	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	
SGF 3a	SGF-3-S010*	Not an existing walked route	Yes - See table 3.3.3	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	
SGF 3b	SGF-3-S011*	Not an existing walked route	Yes - See table 3.3.3	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	



1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
<b>Map(s)</b>	<b>Route section number(s)</b>	<b>Current status of route section(s)</b>	<b>Roll-back proposed? (See Part 7 of Overview)</b>	<b>Landward margin contains coastal land type?</b>	<b>Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin (See maps)</b>	<b>Reason for landward boundary proposal</b>	<b>Explanatory notes</b>
SGF 3b	SGF-3-S012*	Not an existing walked route	Yes - See table 3.3.3	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	
SGF 3b	SGF-3-S013*	Not an existing walked route	Yes - See table 3.3.3	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	
SGF 3b	SGF-3-S014*	Not an existing walked route	Yes - See table 3.3.3	No	Edge of steps and vegetation	Clarity and cohesion	
SGF 3b	SGF-3-S015*	Not an existing walked route	Yes - See table 3.3.3	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	
SGF 3b	SGF-3-S016*	Not an existing walked route	Yes - See table 3.3.3	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	
SGF 3b	SGF-3-S017*	Other existing walked route	Yes - See table 3.3.3	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	
SGF 3b	SGF-3-S018*	Other existing walked route	Yes - See table 3.3.3	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	
SGF 3b	SGF-3-S019*	Other existing walked route	Yes - See table 3.3.3	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
<b>Map(s)</b>	<b>Route section number(s)</b>	<b>Current status of route section(s)</b>	<b>Roll-back proposed? (See Part 7 of Overview)</b>	<b>Landward margin contains coastal land type?</b>	<b>Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin (See maps)</b>	<b>Reason for landward boundary proposal</b>	<b>Explanatory notes</b>
SGF 3b	SGF-3-S020*	Other existing walked route	Yes - See table 3.3.3	No			
SGF 3b	SGF-3-S021*	Other existing walked route	Yes - See table 3.3.3	No			
SGF 3b	SGF-3-S022*	Other existing walked route	Yes - See table 3.3.3	No			
SGF 3b	SGF-3-S023*	Other existing walked route	Yes - See table 3.3.3	No			
SGF 3b	SGF-3-S024*	Other existing walked route	Yes - See table 3.3.3	No			
SGF 3b	SGF-3-S025 FP*	Public footpath	Yes - See table 3.3.3	No			

### 3.3.2 Other options considered: Maps SGF 3a to SGF 3b: Priory Park to Shore Lane, Nacton

Map(s)	Route section numbers(s)	Other option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
SGF 3a and 3b	SGF-3-S001 to SGF-3-S025	We considered aligning the trail along the existing Stour and Orwell Walk which uses lanes and roads inland through Nacton.	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ this proposal is made with the support of the landowner</li> <li>■ it is closer to the sea than the Stour and Orwell Walk and would afford better sea views</li> <li>■ It is safer than the Stour and Orwell Walk which uses narrow country lanes with no pavements</li> <li>■ It provides an opportunity to improve on the current uncontrolled access on the shore by providing a clear route away from saltmarsh and mudflats.</li> <li>■ we concluded that overall the proposed route struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme</li> </ul>
SGF 3b	SGF-3-S012 to SGF-3-S019	<p>We considered a number of route options at Orwell Park in discussion with the landowner to avoid the need to create a trail through the historic park.</p> <p>We also considered a number of routes through the historic park (for which a dedication would be required) and aligning a route along the shore of the River Orwell.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ We opted for the proposed route because</li> <li>■ it creates a trail that minimised the impact on the interests of the landowners at Orwell Park creating a trail with the support of the landowner (dedication)</li> <li>■ It creates a route away from the shore, thus improving the existing uncontrolled access on the shore for environmental reasons.</li> </ul>

Note: Any public rights of way not forming part of the proposed trail would remain available for people to use under their pre-existing rights.

### 3.3.3 Roll-back implementation – more complex situations: Map(s) SGF 3a to SGF 3b: Priory Park to Shore Lane, Nacton

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Feature(s) or site(s) potentially affected	Our likely approach to roll-back
SGF 3a and 3b	SGF-3-S001 to SGF-3-S025	Entire section from Priory Park to Shore Lane, Nacton	If it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of Priory Park (see Report SGF 2) and across excepted land at Orwell Park we will choose a new route after detailed discussions with all relevant interests. In reaching this judgement we will have full regard to the need to seek a fair balance between the interests of potentially affected owners and occupiers and those of the public.

In relation to all other sections where roll-back has been proposed, any later adjustment of the trail is likely to follow the current feature (e.g. cliff edge/beach) for the foreseeable future as any coastal change occurs.

## Part 3.4: Maps

### 3.4.1 Map Index

Map reference	Map title
SGF 3a	Bridge Wood to Priory Park
SGF 3b	Priory Park to Shore Lane, Nacton

## PROPOSALS

### Trail Sections

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

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

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

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

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

### Coastal Margin

#### Explanatory note

Part 3 of the Overview to the report explains where the landward boundary of the coastal margin falls by default. Our proposals include any suggested variation of this default boundary. The purple wash on the map indicates where as a result of our proposals the coastal margin would extend significantly to the landward side of the proposed route of the trail. The coastal margin may include some areas where coastal access rights do not apply, either seaward or landward of the proposed route of the trail: the Overview explains more about this. The landward boundary of the coastal margin may in due course move inland, if the trail rolls back under proposals in this report to respond to coastal change.

- Coastal margin landward of the trail
- Coastal margin landward of the trail which is existing access land

### Other Information

#### Other access rights and routes

- Public bridleways
- Public byways
- Public footpaths
- Restricted byways
- South West Coast Path
- Sustrans national routes
- Existing access land

### Infrastructure types

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

#### Bridges:

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

#### Stiles:

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

#### Gates:

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

#### Miscellaneous:

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

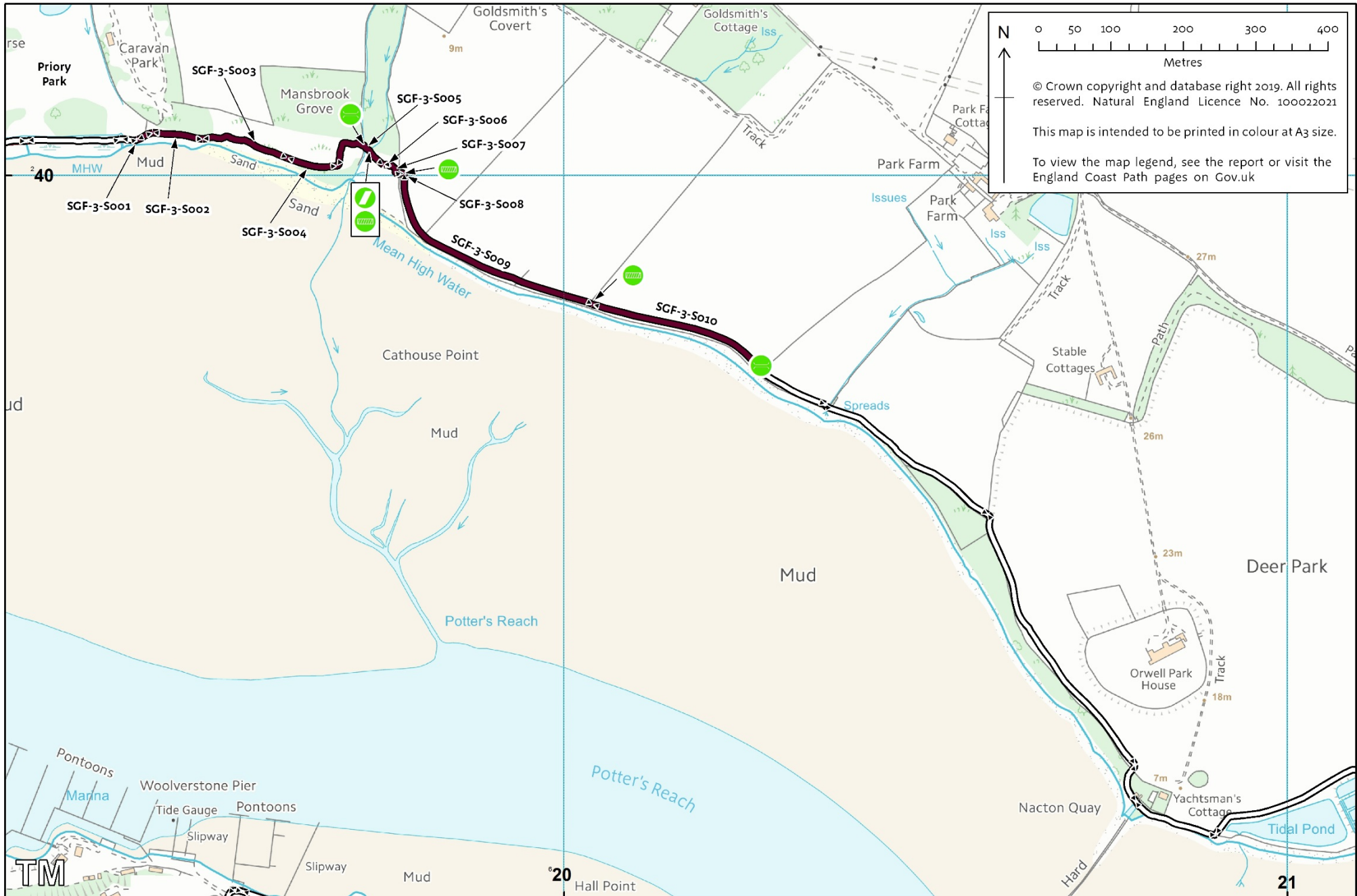
### Infrastructure status

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

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

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

**Map SGF 3a: Priory Park to Park Farm**



Map SGF 3a: Priory Park to Park Farm

Map SGF 3b: Park Farm to Shore Lane, Nacton

