



# England Coast Path Stretch: Aust to Brean Down

## Report ABD 2: New Passage to New Pill Gout

### Part 2.1: Introduction

**Start Point:** New Passage (grid reference: ST 5446 8642)

**End Point:** New Pill Gout (grid reference: ST 5349 8291)

**Relevant Maps:** ABD 2a to ABD 2c

2.1.1 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 Aust and Brean Down.

2.1.2 This report covers length ABD 2 of the stretch, which is the coast between New Passage and New Pill Gout. 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.

2.1.3 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.

2.1.4 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 2.2: Proposals Narrative

### The trail:

2.2.1 Follows the existing route of the Severn Way (a promoted route between Bristol and the source of the River Severn in Wales) except as described in paragraph 2.2.3 below.

2.2.2 Maintains sea views throughout and follows the shoreline closely.

2.2.3 Between the Southern end of the Severn Beach sea wall (ABD-2-S013) and the pipeline north of New Pill Gout (ABD-2-S015) it would follow another existing walked route shown as the trail on map ABD 2c. This would bring the trail closer to the sea and allow sea views.

2.2.4 Our proposals would not affect the status of the existing public rights of way. See map ABD 2c and table 2.3.1 See below for details of the proposed route and table 2.3.2 for a more detailed explanation of the other route options we considered.

### Protection of the environment:

2.2.5 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.

2.2.6 Designated sites that might be affected by our proposals

- Severn Estuary Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Severn Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Severn Estuary Ramsar site
- Severn Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Map C in the Overview shows the extent of designated areas listed.

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

#### 2.2.7 Measures to protect the environment

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Design features of the access proposals	Reason included
ABD 2a	ABD-2-S004	<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 over the lower saltmarsh and flats seaward of the trail (see paragraph 2.2.15)</li><li>■ In addition we propose to install a notice at either end of this part of the path, asking path users to take special care around high tide, to keep their distance from waterbirds and to keep their dogs with them, using a lead if necessary.</li></ul>	<p>To reduce disturbance to non-breeding waterbirds feeding and roosting in this area by recreational users. The waterbirds are sensitive to disturbance and are part of the Severn Estuary Special Protection Area for birds.</p>

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Design features of the access proposals	Reason included
ABD 2a	ABD-2-S010	<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 over the lower saltmarsh and flats seaward of the trail (see paragraph 2.2.15)</li> </ul> <p>In addition we propose to install a notice at the slipway leading from this part of the path to the beach, asking path users to take special care around high tide to keep their distance from waterbirds and keep their dogs with them, using a lead if necessary.</p>	<p>To reduce disturbance to non-breeding waterbirds feeding and roosting in this area by recreational users.</p> <p>The waterbirds are sensitive to disturbance and are part of the Severn Estuary Special Protection Area for birds.</p>
ABD 2a	ABD-2-S015 to ABD-2-S018	<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 over the lower saltmarsh and flats seaward of the trail (see paragraph 2.2.15)</li> </ul> <p>In addition we propose to install a notice at either end of this part of the path to promote the saltmarsh seaward of the path as a refuge for waterbirds and ask people to remain on the path in these areas and to keep their dogs on the path with them, using a lead if necessary.</p>	<p>To reduce disturbance to non-breeding waterbirds feeding and roosting in this area by recreational users.</p> <p>The waterbirds are sensitive to disturbance and are part of the Severn Estuary Special Protection Area for birds.</p>

2.2.8 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 in respect of the natural environment; 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:**

2.2.9 The route between New Passage (ABD-2-S001) and the southern end of Severn Beach sea wall (ABD-2-S012) is hard surfaced and level, along promenade and sea wall, which will provide a good path for those with reduced mobility.

2.2.10 The natural coastal terrain is often challenging for people with reduced mobility and this is the case from the southern end of the sea wall to the main road on map ABD 2c where it follows an uneven grass or bare soil path. Some vegetation clearance, levelling and reseeded would be carried out along route section ABD-2-S018 to improve the path surface before the new access rights come into force.

2.2.11 There are no significant artificial barriers to accessibility on the proposed route. We intend to remove a redundant stile at New Pill Gout to make the trail more accessible before the new access rights come into force, as part of the physical establishment work described below.

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

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

2.2.12 **Estuary:** The report proposes that the trail should include a route along the estuary of the River Severn, extending upstream from the open coast as far as the M48 Severn Bridge, which is the first available foot crossing point over the river. See part 5 of the Overview. The trail covered by this chapter includes part of this estuary route.

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

### **2.2.13 Landward boundary of the coastal margin:**

We have not used our discretion to map the landward extent of the coastal margin to an adjacent physical feature because:

- In some places the default boundary of the coastal margin coincides with a suitable physical feature; and
- In others, there is no nearby physical feature that would add clarity to the extent of the access rights.

**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.**

2.2.14 **Restrictions and/or exclusions:** We have proposed to exclude 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 lower saltmarsh and flat at New Passage to New Pill Gout.*

2.2.15 Access to the lower saltmarsh and mud in the coastal margin seaward of route sections ABD-2-S001 to ABD-2-S022 will be excluded all year round. This is proposed under section 25A of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) because we are satisfied that the land is unsuitable for public access. The exclusion does not affect the route and will have no legal effect on land where coastal access rights do not apply. See Directions Map ABD 2A for further detail.

2.2.16 The Severn estuary has the largest tidal range in the UK of up to 15 metres, exposing a significant extent of soft mud at low tide which becomes rapidly inundated when the tide rises. The mud and the lower areas of saltmarsh on the edge of the mud do not provide a safe walking surface and are subject to frequent tidal inundation.

2.2.17 An area of mudflat and rock between New Passage and Severn Beach that is traditionally used as beach is not excluded.

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

2.2.18 **Coastal erosion:** Natural England is able to propose that the route of the trail would be able to change in the future, without further approval from the Secretary of State, in response to coastal change. This would happen in accordance with the criteria and procedures for 'roll-back' set out in part 7 of the Overview. Natural England may only propose the use of this roll-back power:

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

2.2.19 We have chosen not to make any such proposal in this report. Accordingly the route is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps ABD 2a to ABD 2c as the proposed route of the trail.

### Other future change:

2.2.20 At this point we do not foresee any need for future changes to the access provisions that we have proposed within this report.

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

## Establishment of the trail:

2.2.21 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.

2.2.22 Our estimate of the capital costs for physical establishment of the trail on the proposed route is £8,900 and is informed by:

- information already held by the access authority, South Gloucestershire 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.

2.2.23 There are 2 main elements to the overall cost:

- Signs and notices - to direct people along the route and explain any special considerations such as sensitive wildlife.
- Access furniture – gates, steps and surface works to make the existing route more convenient for use.

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	£4600
Access furniture & surfacing	£3500
Project Management	£800
<b>Total</b>	<b>£8900 (Exclusive of any VAT payable)</b>

2.2.24 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, South Gloucestershire Council will liaise with affected land owners and occupiers about relevant aspects of the design, installation and maintenance of the new signs and infrastructure that are needed on their land. Prior to works being carried out on the ground, all necessary permissions, authorisations and consents will be obtained. All such works would conform to the published standards for National Trails and the other criteria described in our Coastal Access Scheme.

## Maintenance of the trail:

2.2.25 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).

2.2.26 We estimate that the annual cost to maintain the trail will be £1000 (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 2.3: Proposals Tables

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

### 2.3.1 Section Details – Maps ABD 2a to ABD 2c New Passage to New Pill Gout

Key notes on table:

1. Column 2 – an asterisk (\*) against the route section number means see also table 2.3.2: 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 5a - Certain coastal land types are included automatically in the coastal margin where they fall landward of the trail if they touch it at some point. The relevant land type (foreshore, cliff, bank, barrier, dune, beach, flat or section 15 land – see Glossary) is shown in this column where appropriate. “No” means none present on this route section.
4. Columns 5b and 5c – Any entry in these columns means we are proposing to align the landward boundary of the coastal margin on this route section with the physical feature(s) shown in 5b, for the reason in 5c. No text here means that for this route section the landward edge of the margin would be that of the trail itself - or if any default coastal land type is shown in 5a, that would be its landward boundary instead.

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Current status of route section(s)	Roll-back proposed ? (See Part 7 of Overview)	Landward margin contains coastal land type?	Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary proposal	Explanatory notes
ABD 2a	ABD-2-S001 to ABD-2-S005	Public Footpath	No	Yes - Barrier			
	ABD-2-S006	Public Footpath	No	Yes - Barrier			
ABD 2b	ABD-2-S007 to ABD-2-S008	Public Footpath	No	Yes - Barrier			
	ABD-2-S009 to ABD-2-S012	Public footpath	No	Yes - Barrier			
ABD 2c	ABD-2-S013* & ABD-2-S014*	Other existing walked route	No	No			
	ABD-2-S015*	Other existing walked route	No	No			
	ABD-2-S016*	Public Footpath	No	No			
	ABD-2-S017	Public Footpath	No	No			
	ABD-2-S018	Public Footpath	No	No			

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
	ABD-2-S019*	Public Footpath	No	No			
	ABD-2-S020*	Public Footpath	No	No			
	ABD-2-S021*	Public Footpath	No	No			
	ABD-2-S022*	Other existing walked route	No	No			

### 2.3.2 Other options considered: Map ABD 2c Severn Beach Sea Wall to New Pill Gout

Map(s)	Route section numbers(s)	Other option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
ABD 2c	ABD-2-S013 to ABD-2-S016	We considered aligning the trail along the existing public footpath landward of the proposed route. This is the route of the Severn Way as shown on Map ABD 2c	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ it offers better sea views and is closer to the sea; and</li> <li>■ it is comparable, in terms of the safety and convenience of walkers.</li> <li>■ The public footpath would remain available for people to use but would not form part of the designated trail or coastal margin.</li> </ul>
ABD 2c	ABD-2-S019 to ABD-2-S022	A route along the seaward side of the railway line from the sluice at New Pill Gout to Constellation Park (see also maps ABD 3a and ABD 3b in Report ABD 3 of the proposals).	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ At the north end, there would need to be significant new infrastructure to cross New Pill Gout safely.</li> <li>■ At the south end, there is no viable onward route on the seaward side of the railway line.</li> <li>■ The only existing means of crossing the railway at the southern end is via a private vehicle bridge which is not safe for pedestrian access.</li> </ul> <p>Although offering only occasional views of the sea, the proposed route offers a reasonably direct and safe walking route.</p>

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.

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## Part 2.4: Proposals Maps

### 2.4.1 Map Index

Map reference	Map title
ABD 2a	New Passage to Station Road, Severn Beach
ABD 2b	Station Road, Severn Beach to Sea Wall (South)
ABD 2c	Severn Beach Sea Wall to New Pill Gout
Directions Map ABD 2A	Proposed exclusions: Severn Bridge to New Passage

### 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

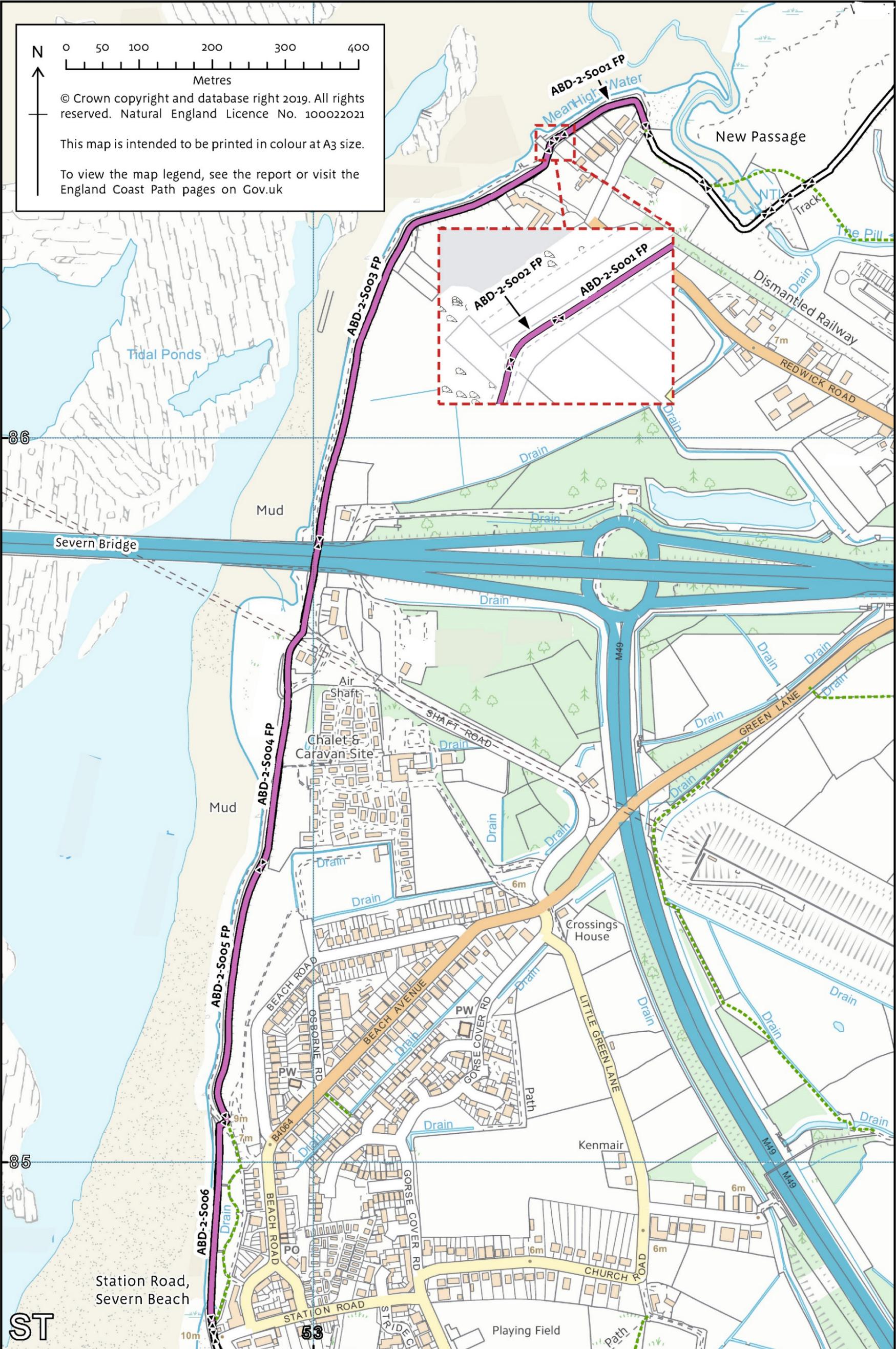
##### Miscellaneous:

- 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



ST

Station Road,  
Severn Beach

53

Playing Field



Map ABD 2c Severn Beach Sea Wall to New Pill Gout

