



England Coast Path Stretch: Aust Brean Down

Report ABD 8: Birnbeck Pier to Uphill Beach

Part 8.1: Introduction

Start Point: Birnbeck Pier (grid reference: ST 3101 6252)

End Point: Uphill Beach (grid reference: ST 3118 5879)

Relevant Maps: ABD 8a to ABD 8c

8.1.1 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

8.1.2 This report covers length ABD 8 of the stretch, which is the coast between Birnbeck Pier and Uphill Beach. 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.

8.1.3 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.

8.1.4 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 8.2: Proposals Narrative

The trail:

8.2.1 Follows existing walked routes, including public rights of way, along most of this length.

8.2.2 Includes a new section of path (route section ABD-8-S005) opposite Birnbeck Island across a car park between the road and the promenade – see map ABD 8a).

8.2.3 Is aligned on the beach/foreshore between the Model Yacht Pond at Weston-Super-Mare (ABD-8-S015) and the caravan park at Uphill (ABD-8-S016) – see map ABD 8c.

8.2.4 Follows the coastline very closely and maintains good views of the sea throughout. See maps ABD 8a to ABD 8c and associated tables below for details.

Protection of the environment:

8.2.5 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.

8.2.6 The following designated sites affect this length of coast:

- Severn Estuary Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Severn Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Severn Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Severn Estuary Ramsar site
- Spring Cove Cliffs SSSI
- Ellenborough Park West SSSI

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

8.2.7 We consider that the coastal environment, including features of the sites listed above, along this length of coast is unlikely to be sensitive to the improvements to coastal access envisaged and that no special measures are needed in respect of our proposals.

8.2.8 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

8.2.9 The natural coastal terrain is often challenging for people with reduced mobility and this is the case on route sections ABD-8-S015 to ABD-8-S016 of our proposed route where the path passes over the beach.

8.2.10 Generally there are few artificial barriers to accessibility on the proposed route but there are steps on route sections ABD-8-S005 and ABD-8-S007 to get to and from the promenade.

8.2.11 To improve the overall safety and convenience of the route:

- at route section ABD-8-S003 the vegetation will be cut back to maximise the width available for the path and a new pavement will be installed – see map ABD 8a.
- at route section ABD-8-S005, a flight of steps will need to be constructed on the embankment below the road adjacent to the car park at Birnbeck Pier – see map ABD 8a.

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

Where we have proposed exercising statutory discretions:

8.2.12 **Estuary:** This report proposes that the trail should contain sections aligned on the estuary of the River Severn, 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 M48 Severn Bridge, as indicated by the extent of the trail shown on map A2.

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

8.2.13 **Landward boundary of the 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 wall or pavement edge to make the extent of the new access rights clearer. See Table 8.3.1 below.

8.2.14 At route sections ABD-8-S010, ABD-8-S013 (map ABD 8a) and ABD-8-S014 (map ABD 8b) we have used this discretion to limit the landward extent of the coastal margin to the landward edge of the pavement/promenade. This has had the effect of reducing the amount of coastal margin that may otherwise have been available by default by virtue of the land being a 'barrier' (see part 3 of the Overview). This option provides the most clarity because it is difficult to identify the precise extent of the landward boundary of the barrier upon which the promenade sits.

8.2.15. At route section ABD-8-S016 (map ABD 8c) we have used this discretion to limit the landward extent of the coastal margin to the seaward edge of the dune. This has had the effect of reducing the amount of coastal margin that would have otherwise been available by default by virtue of the land being a 'dune' (see part 3 of the Overview). There is no clear boundary indicating the landward extent of the dunes which would be the default extent of access rights. The seaward edge of the dunes is therefore the clearest boundary for access users.

8.2.16 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 8.3.1. 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 8.3.1] 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.

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

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

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

8.2.18 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 8a to ABD 8c as the proposed route of the trail.

Other future change:

8.2.19 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:

8.2.20 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.

8.2.21 Our estimate of the capital costs for physical establishment of the trail on the proposed route is £17,100 and is informed by:

- information already held by the access authority, North Somerset 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.

8.2.22 There are 2 main elements to the overall cost:

- Signs to direct people along the route
- Access furniture – including 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

Item	Cost
Signs	£1600
Access furniture and surfacing	£14000
Project Management	£1500
Total	£17100 (Exclusive of any VAT payable)

8.2.23 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, North Somerset 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:

8.2.24 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).

8.2.25 We estimate that the annual cost to maintain the trail will be £1900 (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 8.3: Proposals Tables

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

8.3.1 Section Details – Maps ABD 8a to ABD 8c: Birnbeck Pier to Uphill

Key notes on table:

1. Column 2 – an asterisk (*) against the route section number means see also table 8.3.2: 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 8.3.3 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
ABD 8a	ABD-8-S001*	Public Highway	Yes- see table 8.3.3	No			
ABD 8a	ABD-8-S002*	Public Footway (pavement)	Yes – see table 8.3.3	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
ABD 8a	ABD-8-S003*	Public Highway	Yes – see table 8.3.3	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
ABD 8a	ABD-8-S004*	Public Footway (pavement)	Yes – see table 8.3.3	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
ABD 8a	ABD-8-S005*	Not an existing walked route	Yes- see table 8.3.3	No			
ABD 8a	ABD-8-S006*	Other existing	Yes – see table 8.3.3	Yes - barrier			

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
		walked route					
ABD 8a	ABD-8-S007*	Public Footway	Yes – see table 8.3.3	Yes - barrier			
ABD 8a	ABD-8-S008*	Public Footway	Yes – see table 8.3.3	Yes - barrier			
ABD 8a	ABD-8-S009*	Public Footway	Yes – see table 8.3.3	Yes - barrier			
ABD 8a	ABD-8-S010*	Public Footway	Yes – see table 8.3.3	Yes – barrier	Landward edge of pavement/promenade	Clarity and cohesion	
ABD 8a	ABD-8-S011*	Public Footway	No	Yes - barrier			
ABD 8a	ABD-8-S012*	Public Footway	No	Yes - barrier			
ABD 8a	ABD-8-S013*	Public Footway	No	Yes - barrier	Landward edge of promenade/pavement	Clarity and cohesion	
ABD 8b	ABD-8-S014	Other existing walked route	No	Yes - barrier	Landward edge of promenade/pavement	Clarity and cohesion	
ABD 8c	ABD-8-S015	Other existing walked route	Yes	Yes - beach			
ABD 8c	ABD-8-S016	Other existing walked route	Yes	Yes – beach and dune	Seaward edge of the dune	Clarity and cohesion	

8.3.2 Other options considered: Maps ABD 8a to ABD 8c

Map(s)	Route section numbers(s)	Other option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
ABD 8a	ABD-8-S001 to ABD-8-S010	Various routes over Worlebury Hill and through residential streets to the south and east of the Woods before joining the promenade in Weston-super-Mare.	We opted for the proposed route because all the various routes considered would take the trail further away from the coast with little or no sea views.
ABD 8a	ABD-8-S005	Route avoiding the privately owned car park by continuing further along road and down a publicly accessible flight of steps to the promenade.	We opted for the proposed route because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ there is no pavement on the stretch of road leading to the access point for the steps; and ■ The steps themselves are steep.
ABD 8a	ABD-8-S010 to ABD-8-S013	Route along the promenade past the Marine Lake but avoiding the Knightstone Peninsula	We opted for the proposed route because <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the route around the Knightstone Peninsula offers good views of the sea.

Map(s)	Route section numbers(s)	Other option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
ABD 8a	ABD-8-S010	Route across the path seaward of the Marine Lake.	<p>We opted for the proposed route because the seaward path:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ regularly floods and is often impassable; and ■ offers no significant advantages over the proposed route in terms of views. <p>Under the proposals, the path would remain available for people to use as part of the spreading room, but would not form part of the designated trail.</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.

8.3.3 Roll-back implementation – more complex situations: Map 8a Birnbeck Pier to Knightstone

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Feature(s) or site(s) potentially affected	Our likely approach to roll-back
ABD 8a	ABD-8-S001 to ABD-8-S010	Worlebury Hill and residential streets on the northern edge of Weston-Super-Mare	If it is no longer possible to find a viable route along Birkett Road and Kewstoke Road (route sections ABD-8-S001 to ABD-8-S004) we will choose a route landward of the road, following discussions with owners and occupiers of affected land.

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 8.4: Proposals Maps

8.4.1 Map Index

Map reference	Map title
ABD 8a	Birnbeck Island to Knightstone
ABD 8b	Knightstone Road to Clarence Park
ABD 8c	Clarence Park to Uphill



Coastal Access - Natural England's Proposals

Legend for all maps

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

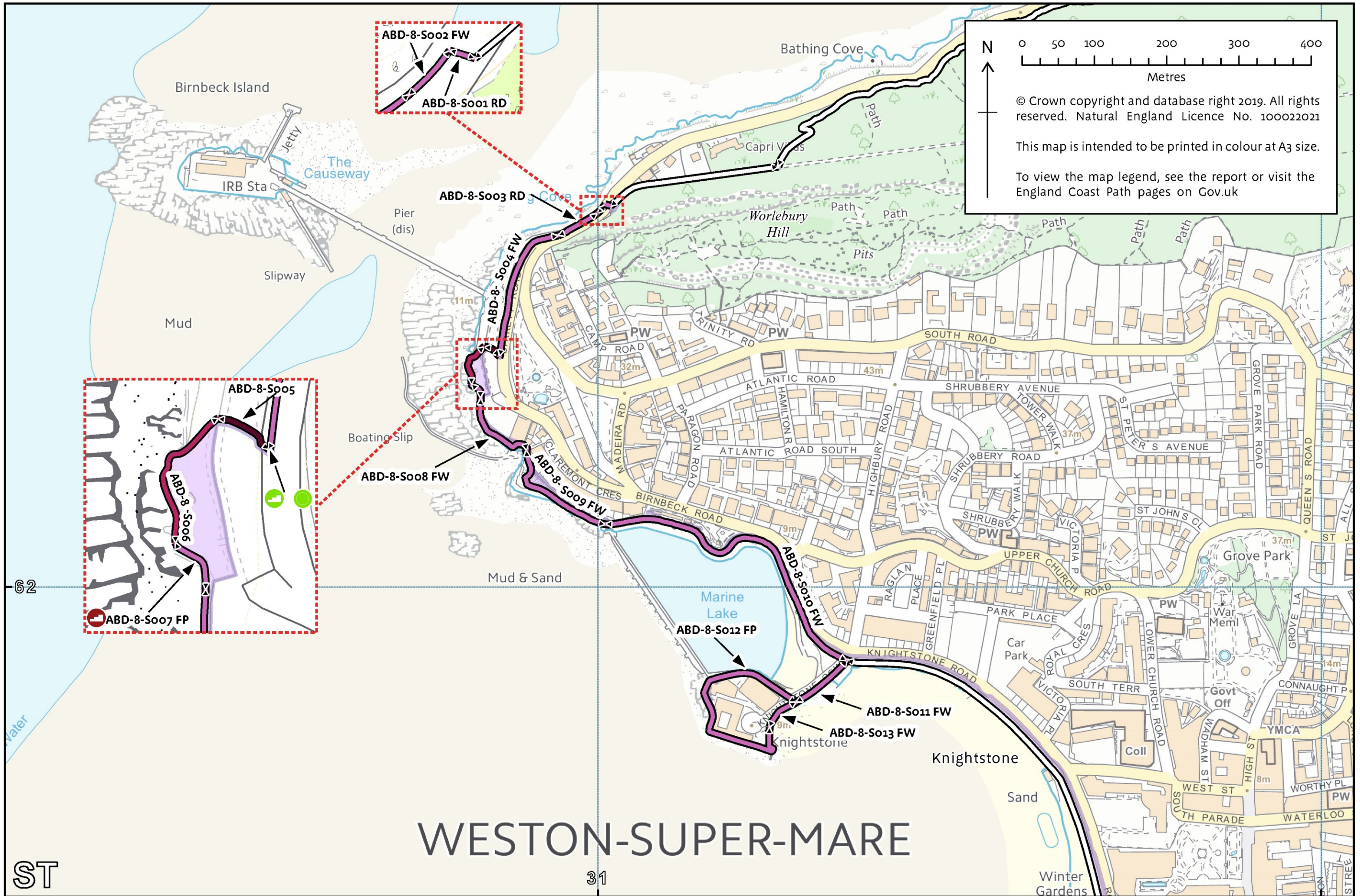
- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Bridges: | Stiles: | Gates: |
| Clapper bridge | Ladder stile | Bristol gate |
| Footbridge | Lift-up stile | Field gate |
| Quad bike bridge | Squeeze stile | Gateway with no gate |
| Sleeper bridge | Step stile | Kissing gate |
| Vehicle bridge | Stone stile | Pedestrian gate |
| | | Wheelchair gate |
| Miscellaneous: | | |
| Barrier | Cycle chicane | Interpretation panel |
| Boardwalk | Drainage | Ramp |
| Bollard | Drop-kerb | Revetment |
| Cattle grid | Gap in fence | Stepping stones |
| Culvert | Hurdle | Steps |

Infrastructure status

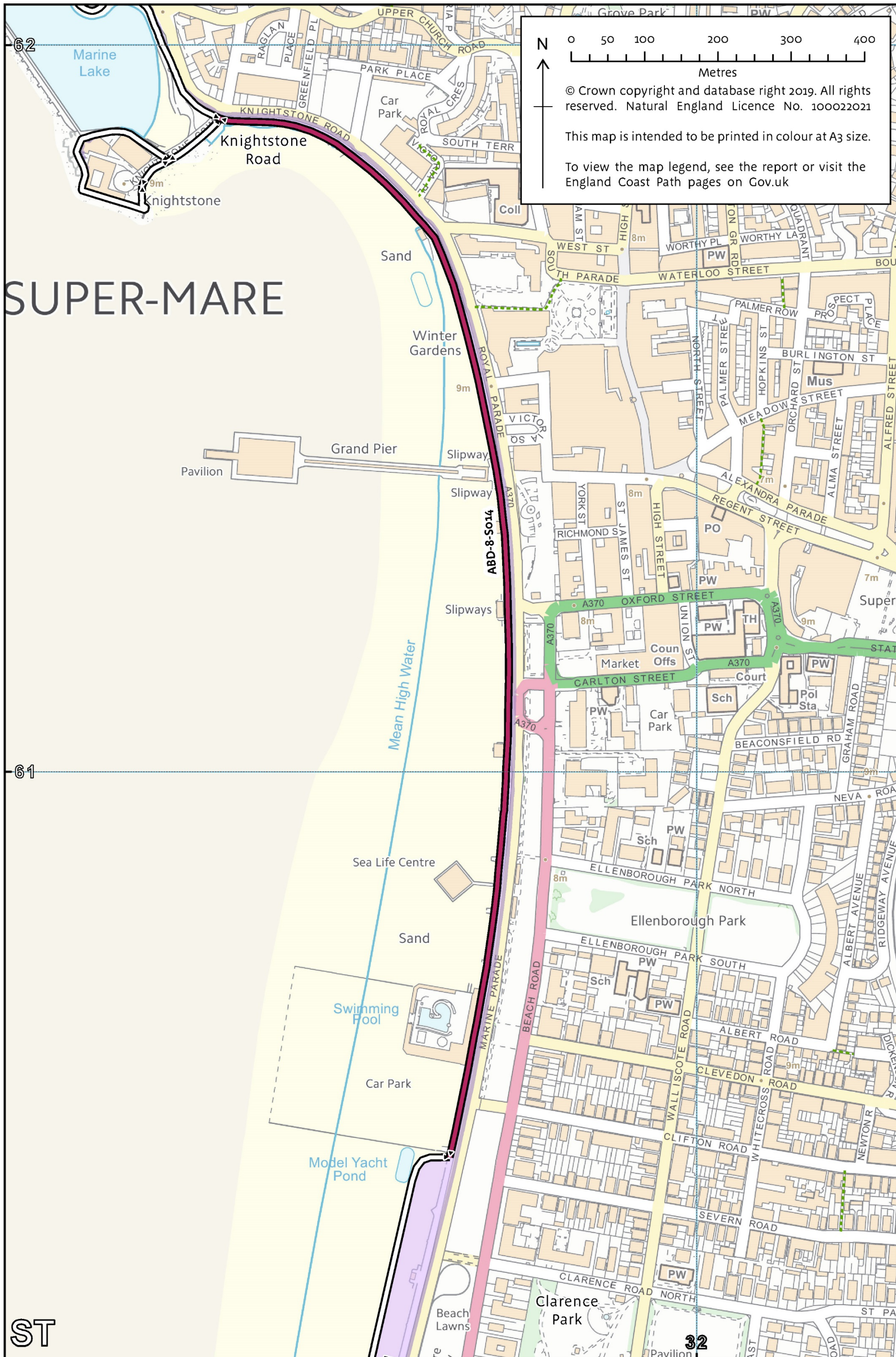
Each symbol shown on the map is colour coded as appropriate, as in this example for a set of steps:

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

Map ABD 8a Birnbeck Island to Knightstone

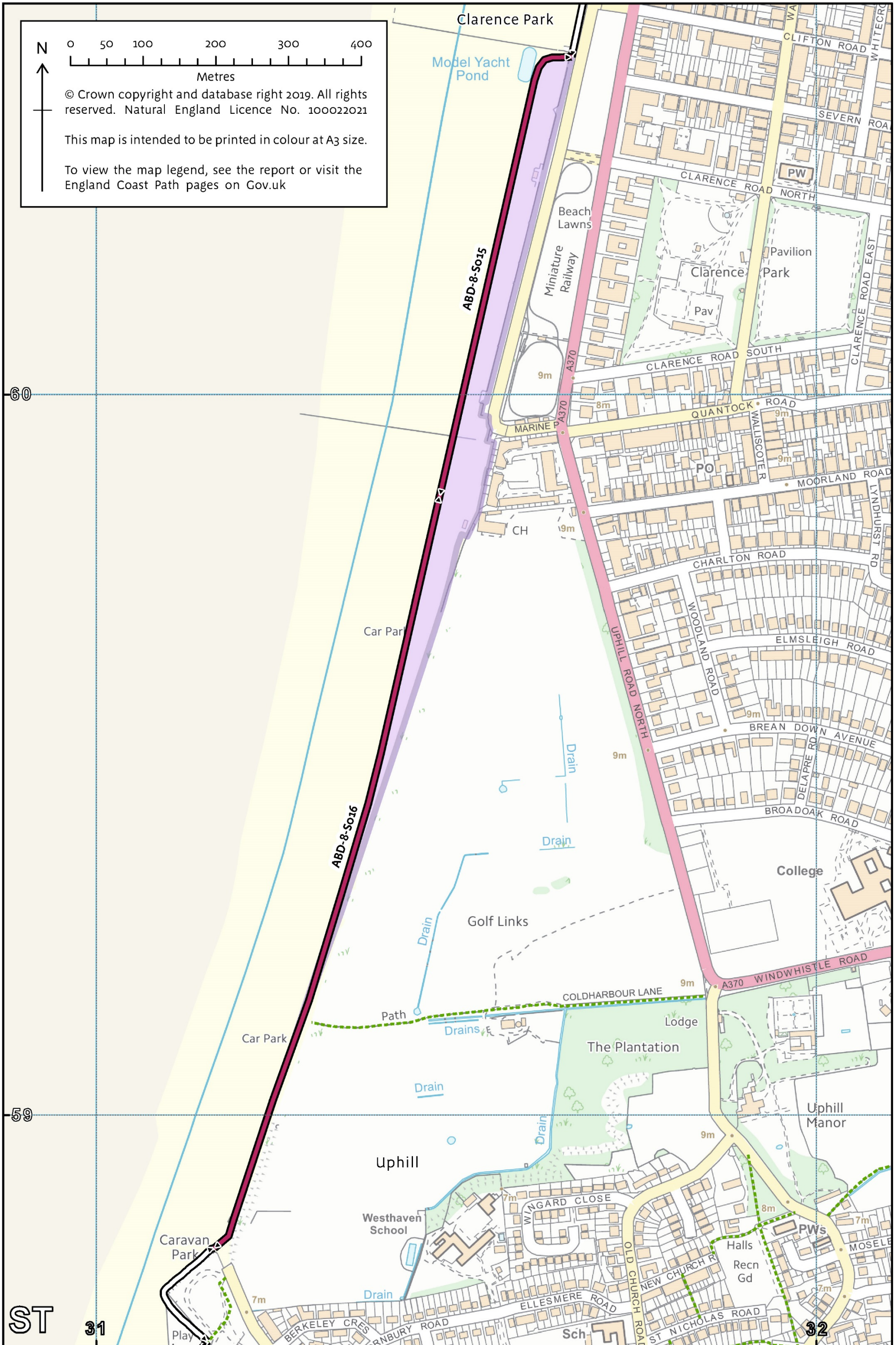


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0 50 100 200 300 400
Metres
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To view the map legend, see the report or visit the England Coast Path pages on Gov.uk



Map ABD 8b Knightstone Road to Clarence Park

Map ABD 8c Clarence Park to Uphill



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0 50 100 200 300 400
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