



England Coast Path Stretch: Combe Martin to Marsland Mouth

Report CMM 5: Velator to Taw Bridge, Barnstaple

Part 5.1: Introduction

Start Point:	Velator (Grid reference SS 4871 3576)
End Point:	Taw Bridge, Barnstaple (Grid reference SS 5520 3281)
Relevant Maps:	CMM 5a to CMM 5d

5.1.1 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 Combe Martin and Marsland Mouth.

5.1.2 This report covers length CMM 5 of the stretch, which is the coast between Velator and Taw Bridge, Barnstaple. 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.

5.1.3 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.

5.1.4 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 5.2: Proposals Narrative

The trail:

5.2.1 Follows existing walked routes, including public rights of way, along all of this length.

5.2.2 Follows the South West Coast Path as currently walked and managed along all of this length. See maps CMM 5a to CMM 5d and table 5.3.1 below for more details.

5.2.3 Generally follows the coastline and estuary quite closely over this length and maintains good views of the sea (estuary) apart from between RMB Chivenor and Chivenor Industrial Estate (maps CMM 5a and CMM 5b, route sections CMM-5-S002 to CMM-5-S005) where the views are obscured by buildings.

The South West Coast Path

5.2.4 The South West Coast Path follows the coast over this length and we propose adopting the walked line of this route as the line of the England Coast Path. There are places where the walked line differs slightly from the route originally approved by the Secretary of State, as the path has evolved over time to cope with coastal erosion and other processes. As explained at part 6a of the Overview, assuming these proposals are approved, we intend to use a separate variation report to the Secretary of State to change the route of the existing national trail to reflect the approved line of the England Coast Path insofar as the two are different.

5.2.5 The route across the A361 Taw Bridge at Barnstaple meets our requirement for the England Coast Path. However, it is the preference of stakeholders, for the South West Coast Path to remain on its current alignment along the Tarka Trail and across Barnstaple Long Bridge. Therefore we propose that the England Coast Path and the South West Coast Path will diverge –the South West Coast Path keeping its current approved route and the England Coast Path using the A361 Taw Bridge. Accordingly, a variation report will not bring the South West Coast Path into line with the England Coast Path at this location, and the two routes will remain separate.

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.

5.2.6 The following designated sites affect this length of coast:

- Taw-Torridge Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- North Devon Biosphere Reserve

Maps C and D in the Overview shows the extent of designated areas listed.

5.2.7 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.

5.2.8 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:

5.2.9 There are no artificial barriers to accessibility on the proposed route.

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

Where we have proposed exercising statutory discretions:

5.2.10 **Estuary:** This report proposes that the trail should contain sections aligned on the estuary of the River Taw 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 A361 Taw Bridge in Barnstaple, as indicated by the extent of the trail shown on Map CMM 5d. This report covers the north bank of the River Taw from Horsey Island/River Caen to the A361 Taw Bridge. The River Taw from the River Caen/Horsey Island to Airy Point is covered by length report CMM 4. The south bank of the River Taw is covered by length report CMM 6.

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

5.2.11 **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 fence line, pavement or track to make the extent of the new access rights clearer. See Table 5.3.1 below.

5.2.12 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 4b and 4c of table 5.3.1. Where these columns are left blank, we are making no such proposals, so the default landward boundary applies. See the note relating to Columns 4b & 4c [above Table 5.3.1] 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.

5.2.13 **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 saltmarsh/flat on the Taw-Torridge estuary.

5.2.14 Access to the saltmarsh/mudflat in the coastal margin of the Taw estuary between Chivenor (map CMM 5b) and the A361 Taw Bridge (map CMM 5d) seaward of route sections CMM-5-S005 to CMM-5-S008 is to be excluded all year-round by direction under section 25A 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 where coastal access rights do not apply. See map Directions Map CMM 5A and map E1 in the Overview for details.

5.2.15 The saltmarsh and flats in the Taw -Torrige estuary are uneven and wet underfoot and contain many creeks and channels, some of which would not be readily apparent to walkers and which can pose a significant risk. The RNLI has warned that due to the fast moving tides the majority of the foreshore in both estuaries is unsuitable for public access, apart from the publically used beach areas at Instow and Appledore.

5.2.16 This direction 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.

5.2.17 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.

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

5.2.18 **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 response to such changes.

5.2.19 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 CMM 5a to CMM 5d as the proposed route of the trail.

Other future change:

5.2.20 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:

5.2.21 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.

5.2.22 Our estimate of the capital costs for physical establishment of the trail on the proposed route is £1,552 and is informed by:

- information already held by the access authority, Devon County Council, in relation to the management of the existing South West Coast Path;
- 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.

5.2.23 There is one main element to the overall cost:

- **New signs** - new 'Coast Path' signs are proposed at key coast footpath entry points such as at Velator, where the proposed England Coast Path joins the Tarka Trail (map CMM 5a, trail section CMM-5-S001) and where it leaves the Tarka Trail at both ends of the Taw (A361) Bridge (map CMM 5d, trail sections CMM-5-S005/CMM-5-S006 and CMM-5-S008). These will show coastal destinations further afield than the next headland/village, and in the case of the Taw Bridge signs, highlight Barnstaple as an 'off route' destination. Any signs and information boards with outdated information about the existing route of the South West Coast Path would require replacement.

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	£1,350
Project management	£202
Total	£1,552 (Exclusive of any VAT payable)

5.2.24 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, Devon 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.

Maintenance of the trail:

5.2.25 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).

5.2.26 We estimate that the annual cost to maintain the trail will be £914 (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 5.3: Proposals Tables

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

5.3.1 Details for sections that follow the South West Coast Path: Maps CMM 5a to CMM 5d - Velator to Taw Bridge, Barnstaple

Key notes on table:

1. Column 2 – an asterisk (*) against the route section number means see also table 5.3.2: Other options considered.
2. Column 3 – ‘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 4a - 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 4b and 4c – 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 4b, for the reason in 4c. 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 4a, that would be its landward boundary instead.

1	2	3	4a	4b	4c	5
Map(s)	Route section number(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
CMM 5a	CMM-5-S001	No	No	Path (landward edge)	Clarity and cohesion	
	CMM-5-S002	No	No			
	CMM-5-S003	No	No	Path (landward edge)	Clarity and cohesion	
CMM 5b, 5c & 5d	CMM-5-S004	No	No			
	CMM-5-S005	No	No	Path (landward edge)	Clarity and cohesion	
CMM 5d	CMM-5-S006*	No	No	Path (landward edge)	Clarity and cohesion	
	CMM-5-S007*	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	

1	2	3	4a	4b	4c	5
Map(s)	Route section number(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
	CMM-5-S008*	No	No	Path (landward edge)	Clarity and cohesion	

5.3.2 Other options considered - Map CMM 5d: Pottington Business Park to Taw Bridge, Barnstaple

Map(s)	Route section numbers(s)	Other option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
CMM 5d	CMM-5-S006 to CMM-5-S008	We considered aligning the trail along the Tarka Trail/South West Coast Path on the northern side of the Taw estuary where it passes underneath the Taw Bridge (from the end of trail section CMM-5-S005), into Barnstaple, crossing the river via Barnstaple Long Bridge and then back along the southern side of the Taw estuary to Anchorwood Bank/Sticklepath (re-joining the route at trail section CMM-5-S008).	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ it is closer to the sea and maintains views of the sea ■ this proposal is made with the support of the landowner ■ Natural England’s discretion only allows it to extend the trail upstream as far as the first bridge or tunnel with pedestrian public access ■ facilities and amenities in Barnstaple will be sign-posted at the junctions of trail sections CMM-5-S005/CMM-5-S006 and CMM-5-S008/CMM-6-S001 (see Length Report CMM 6) <p>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</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.

Part 5.4: Proposals Maps

5.4.1 Map Index

Map reference	Map title
CMM 5a	Velator to Heanton Cottage
CMM 5b	Heanton Cottage to Lower Strand
CMM 5c	Lower Strand to Pottington Buisness Park
CMM 5d	Pottington Business Park to Taw Bridge, Barnstaple
Directions Map CMM 5A	Proposed direction under S25A CROW - Taw-Torridge Estuary
Directions Map CMM 5B	Proposed direction under S25A CROW - Taw-Torridge Estuary
Directions Map CMM 5C	Proposed direction under S25A CROW - Taw-Torridge Estuary

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:

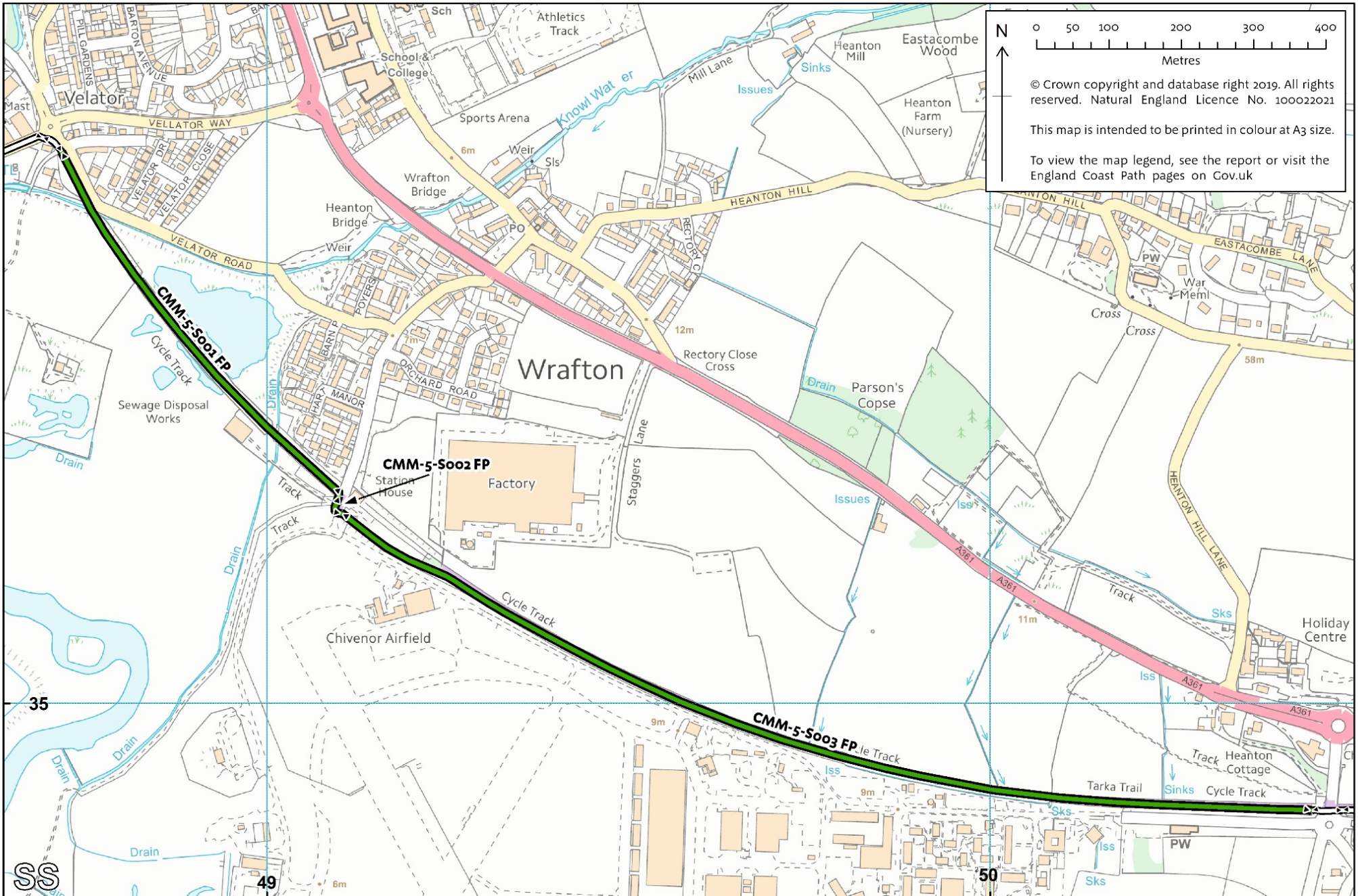
- Barrier
- Boardwalk
- Bollard
- Cattle grid
- Culvert
- Cycle chicane
- Drainage
- Drop-kerb
- Gap in fence
- Hurdle
- Interpretation panel
- Ramp
- Revetment
- Stepping stones
- Steps

Infrastructure status

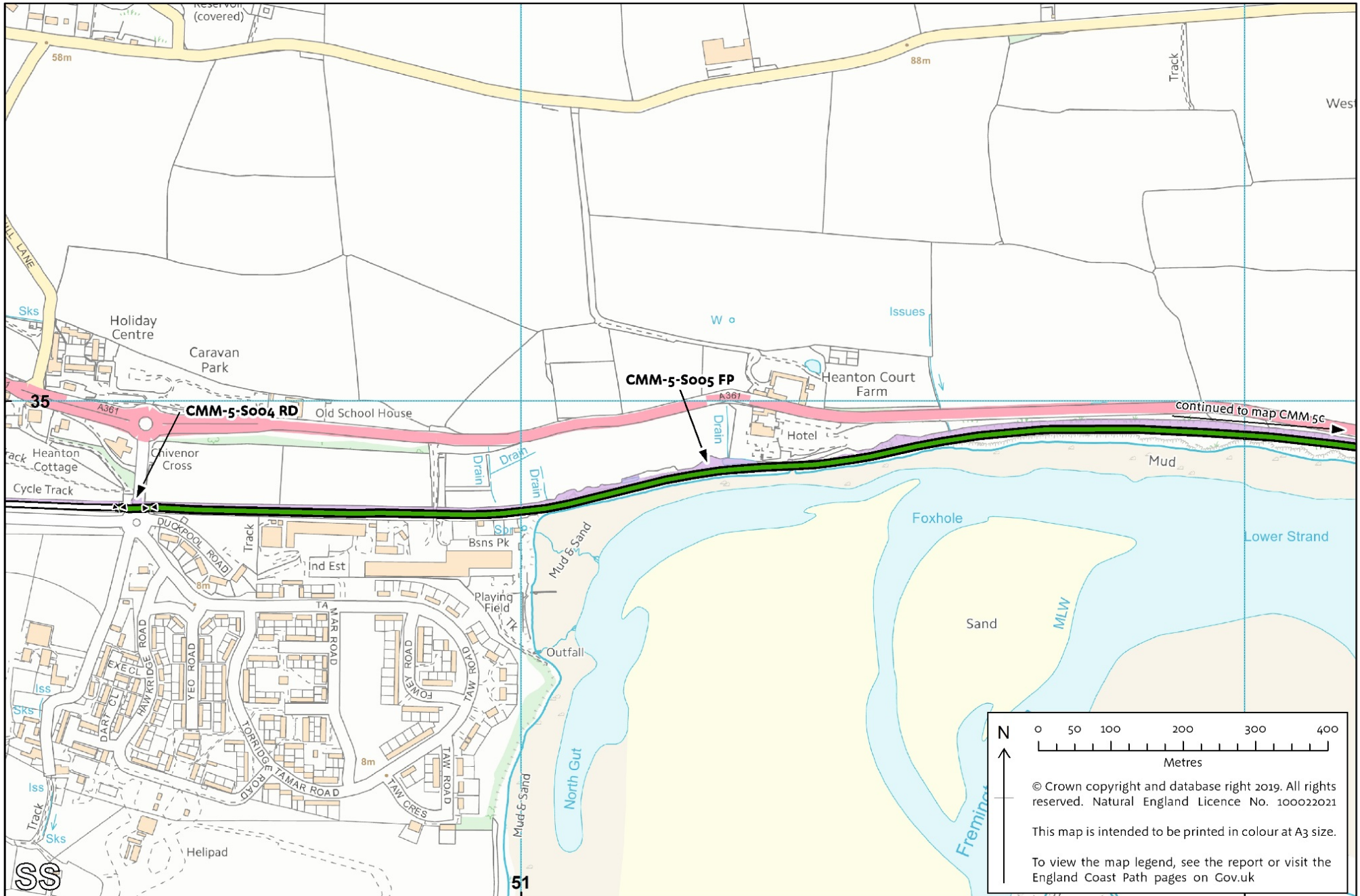
Each symbol shown on the map is colour coded as appropriate, as in this example for a set of steps:

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

Map CMM 5a: Velator to Heanton Cottage

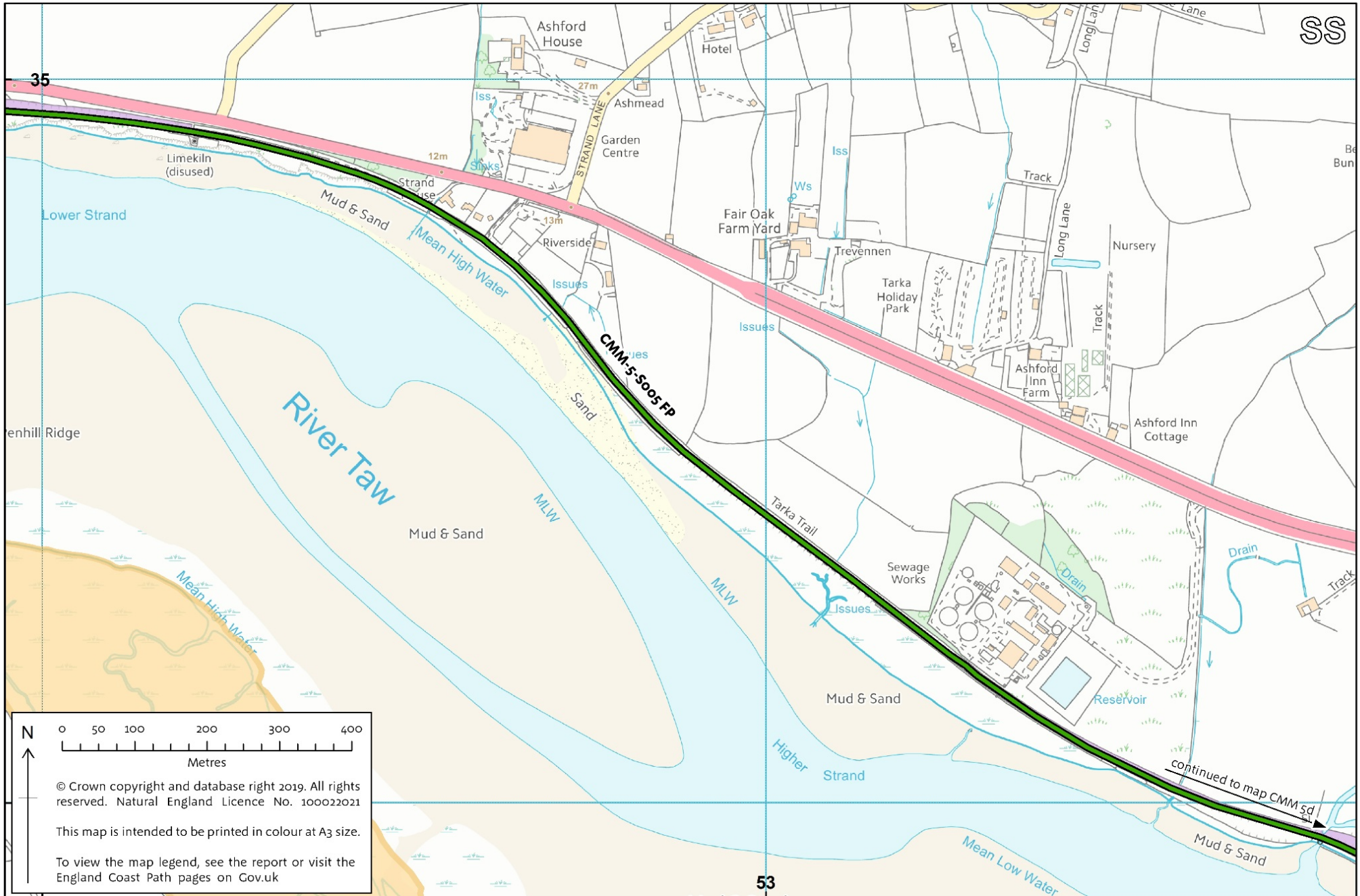


Map CMM 5b: Heanton Cottage to Lower Strand



Map CMM 5b: Heanton Cottage to Lower Strand

Map CMM 5c: Lower Strand to Pottington Business Park



Map CMM 5c: Lower Strand to Pottington Business Park

N

0 50 100 200 300 400

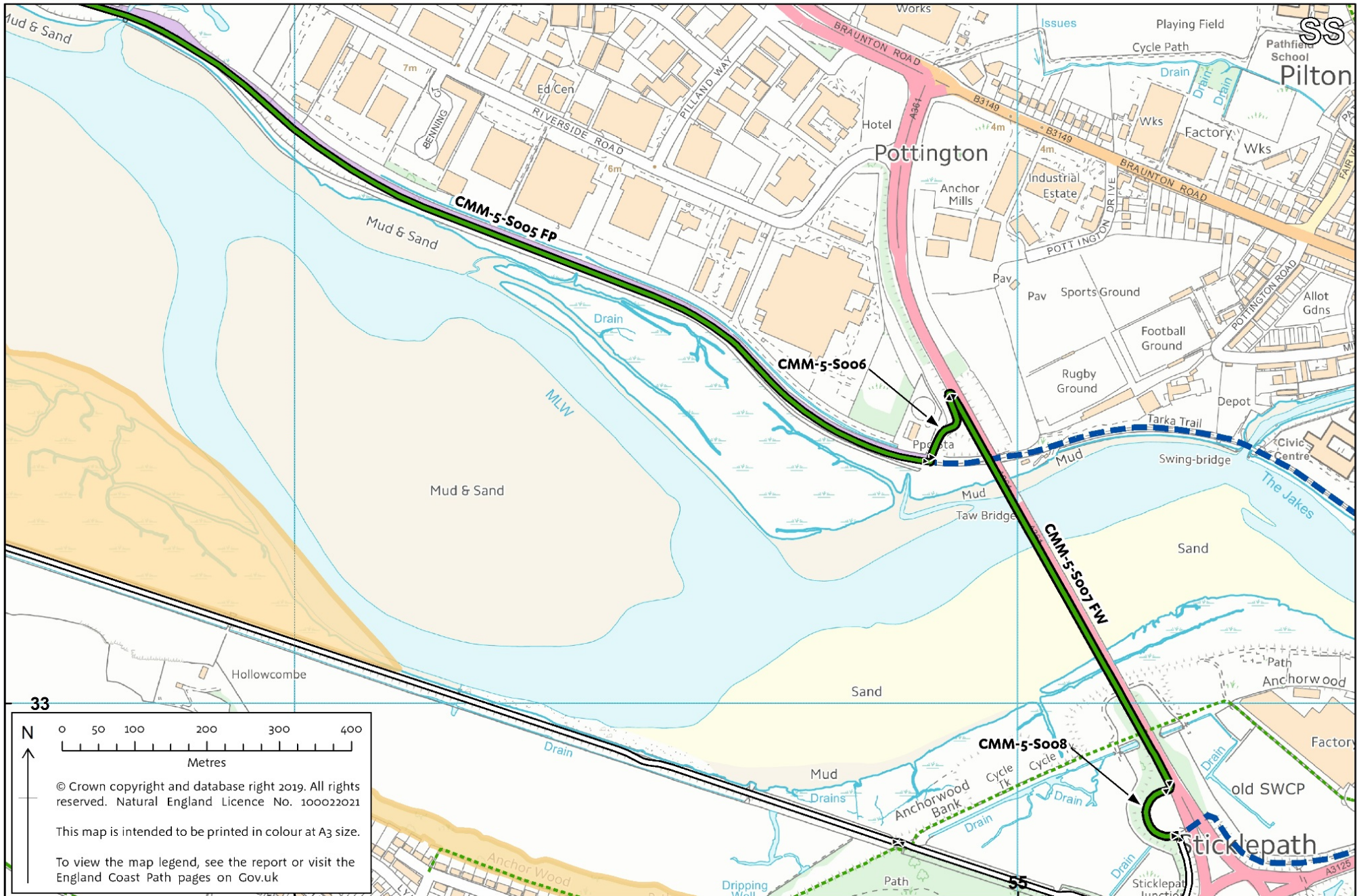
Metres

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This map is intended to be printed in colour at A3 size.

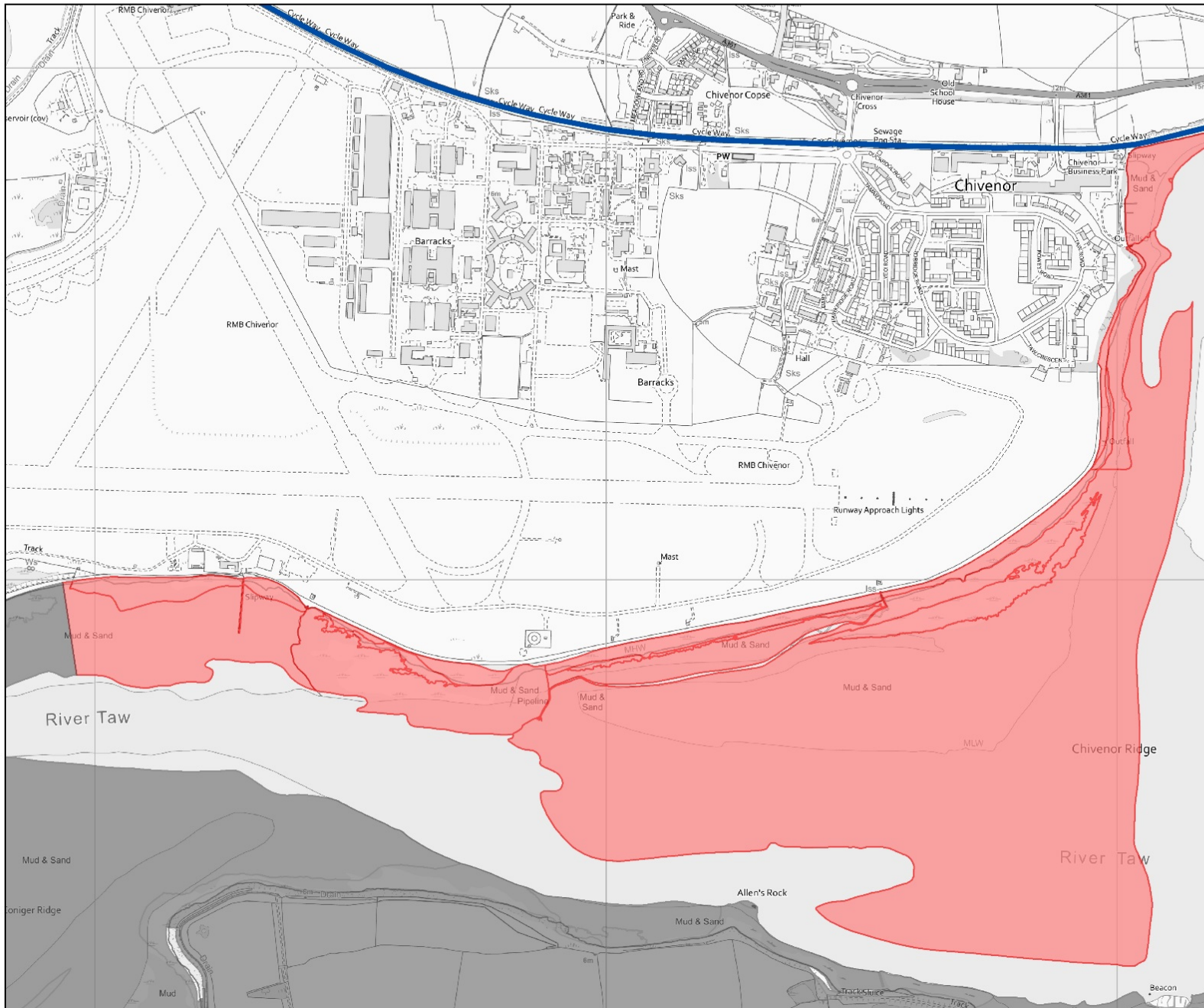
To view the map legend, see the report or visit the England Coast Path pages on Gov.uk

Map CMM 5d: Pottington Business Park to Taw Bridge, Barnstaple



Map CMM 5d: Pottington Business Park to Taw Bridge, Barnstaple

Directions Map CMM 5A



Trail Sections

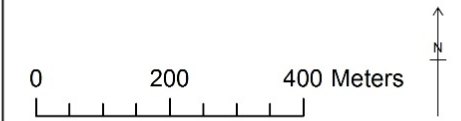
— Proposed route

Restrictions

Proposed long-term access exclusion, Unsuitable for Public Access, Section 25A, No Public Access, Year round

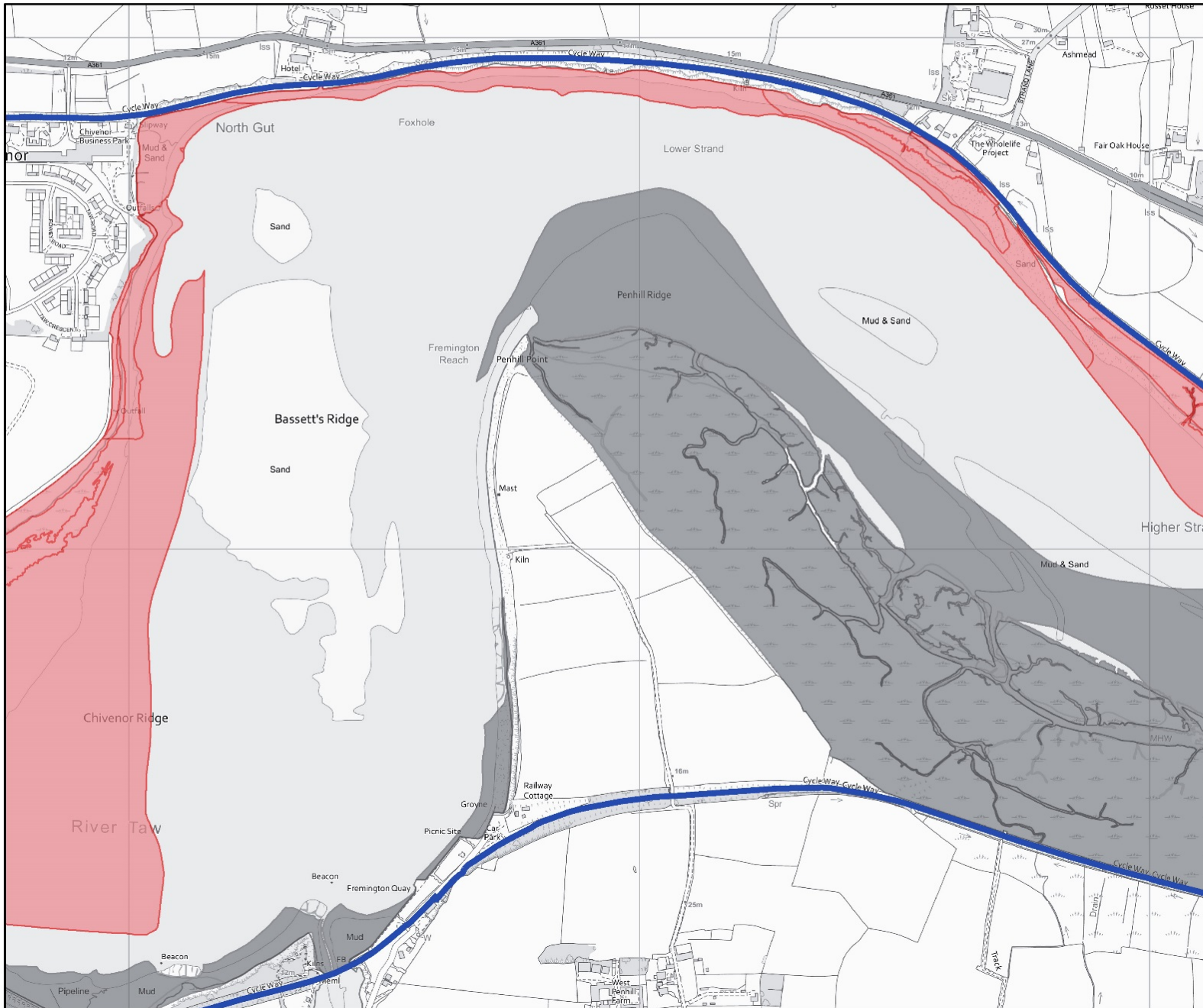
Directions shown in other CMM report

These directions only affect land where coastal access rights apply and will not affect existing rights of access, such as on public rights of way.



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Directions Map CMM 5B



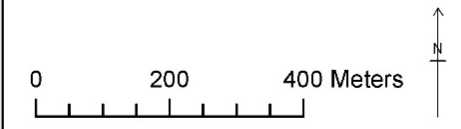
Trail Sections

— Proposed route

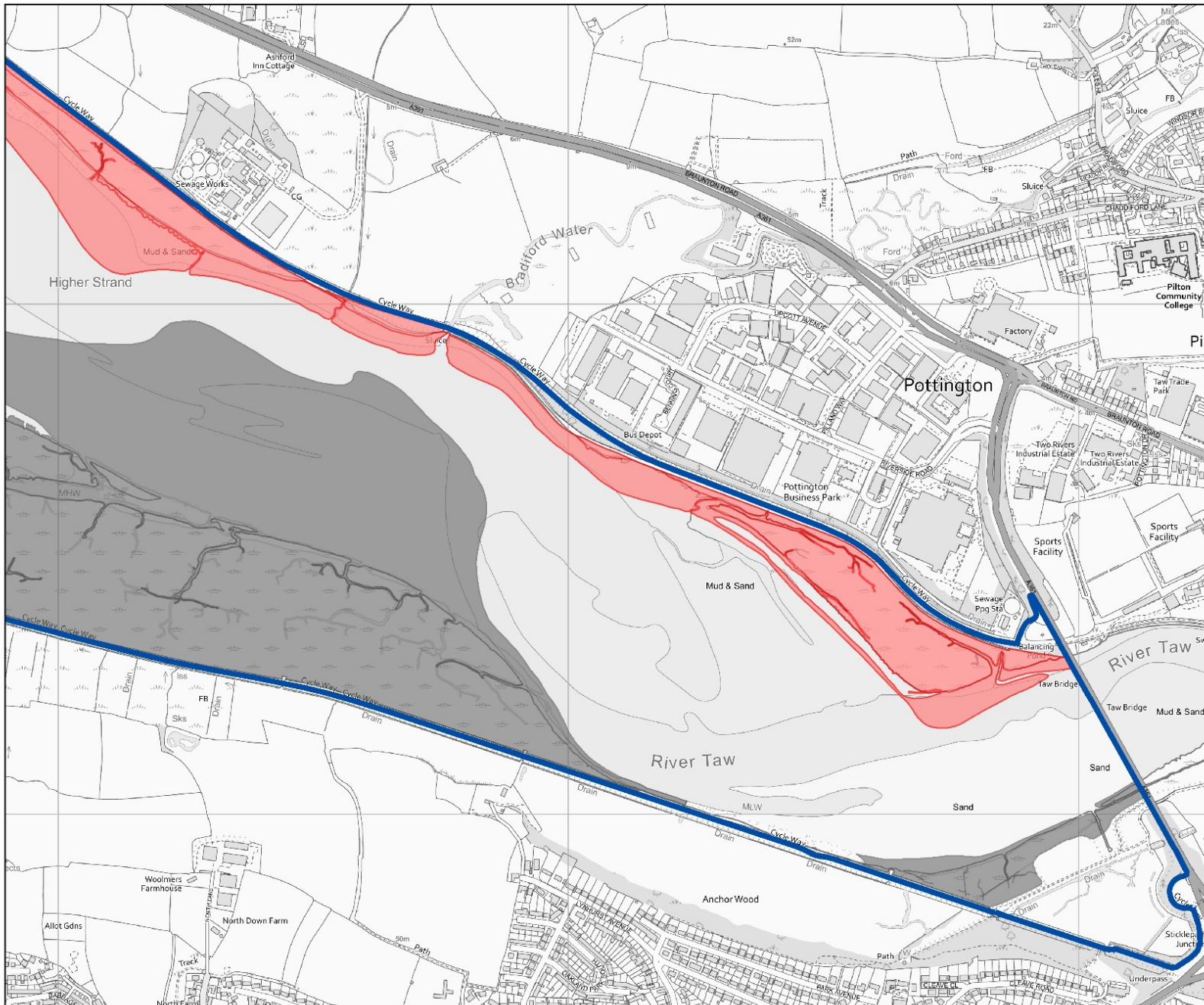
Restrictions

- Proposed long-term access exclusion, Unsuitable for Public Access, Section 25A, No Public Access, Year round
- Directions shown in other CMM report

These directions only affect land where coastal access rights apply and will not affect existing rights of access, such as on public rights of way.



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Trail Sections

— Proposed route

Restrictions

Proposed long-term access exclusion, Unsuitable for Public Access, Section 25A, No Public Access, Year round

Directions shown in other CMM report

These directions only affect land where coastal access rights apply and will not affect existing rights of access, such as on public rights of way.

