



England Coast Path Stretch: Iwade to Grain

Report IGR 10: Burnt House Farm to Stoke Creek Crossing

Part 10.1: Introduction

Start Point:	Burnt House Farm (Grid reference 580266 172419)
End Point:	Stoke Creek Crossing (Grid reference 582723 174728)
Relevant Maps:	IGR 10a to IGR 10b

10.1.1 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 Iwade in Kent, and Grain in Medway.

10.1.2 This report covers length IGR 10 of the stretch, which is the coast between Burnt House Farm and Stoke Creek Crossing in Medway. 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.

10.1.3 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.

10.1.4 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 10.2: Proposals Narrative

The trail:

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

10.2.2 Includes one section of new path, adjacent to Eschol Road, near Kingsnorth.

10.2.3 Has a significant inland diversion to take the trail past the site of the former Kingsnorth Power Station, the Kingsnorth & London Medway Commercial Park and to safely cross the coastal railway line.

10.2.4 Maintains mostly good, far reaching views of the Medway Estuary between North Street and Stoke Creek Crossing (map IGR 10b).

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.

10.2.5 The following designated sites affect this length of coast:

- Medway Estuary and Marshes SPA
- Medway Estuary and Marshes Ramsar site
- Medway Estuary and Marshes SSSI
- Medway Estuary Marine Conservation Zone

10.2.6 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.

10.2.7 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:

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

- The trail would follow an uneven grass or bare soil path.

10.2.9 At Stoke Creek railway level crossing (map IGR 10b), the existing stiles will be replaced with pedestrian gates, which will provide enough space for large mobility scooters and pushchairs as well as making the trail easier to use. We envisage this happening 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:

10.2.10 **Estuary:** This report proposes that the trail should contain sections aligned on the estuary of the River Medway. Natural England proposes to exercise its functions as if the sea included the estuarial waters of that river as far as Rochester Bridge, as indicated by the extent of the trail shown on Overview Map A2.

10.2.11 The Medway Estuary empties into both The Swale and the Thames estuaries. Alignment along these estuaries also formed part of our proposals made for Whitstable to Iwade and Grain to Woolwich stretches, submitted to the Secretary of State on 27 June 2017 and 5 June 2019, respectively.

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

10.2.12 **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 10.3.1 below.

10.2.13 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 10.3.1. 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 10.3.1) 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.

10.2.14 **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 saltmarsh / flat at Kingsnorth (Medway Estuary)

10.2.15 Access to the mudflat and saltmarsh in the coastal margin seaward of route sections IGR-10-S001 to IGR-3-S019 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 on land where coastal access rights do not apply. See Directions Map IGR 10A.

10.2.16 The mudflat in this location is soft and sinking. It does not provide a safe walking surface and is subject to frequent tidal inundation. RNLI and Coastguard data indicates incidents of people being rescued from the mud in the Medway Estuary. Areas of saltmarsh have deep channels and creeks, some of which would not be readily apparent to walkers and can pose a significant risk.

10.2.17 These directions will not prevent or affect:

- any existing local use of the land by: 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.

10.2.18 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 of mudflats and saltmarsh.

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

10.2.19 **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.

10.2.20 Column 4 of table 10.3.1 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 map IGR 10a as the proposed route of the trail.

10.2.21 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.

On sections for which roll-back is not proposed in table 10.3.1, the route is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps IGR 10a to IGR 10b as the proposed route of the trail.

10.2.22 We are aware sections of low lying coast near Kingsnorth have been shortlisted for 'managed re-alignment' within the Medway Estuary and Swale Coastal Flood and Erosion Risk Strategy within the next 10 years. While the exact locations and timings are currently being refined, the trail is likely to be rolled back to follow any new seawall or re-alignment design.

Other future change:

10.2.23 At this point we do not foresee any other 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:

10.2.24 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.

10.2.25 Our estimate of the capital costs for physical establishment of the trail on the proposed route is £7,361 and is informed by:

- information already held by the access authority, Medway Council, in relation to the management of the existing public rights of way;
- 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.

10.2.26 There are two main elements to the overall cost:

- A significant number of new signs would be needed on the trail.
- Pedestrian gates will replace stiles at Stoke Creek Level Crossing.

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	£4,668
Pedestrian gates	£1,733
Project management	£960
Total	£7,361 (Exclusive of any VAT payable)

10.2.27 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, Medway 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:

10.2.28 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).

10.2.29 We estimate that the annual cost to maintain the trail will be £1,863 (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 10.3: Proposals Tables

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

10.3.1 Section Details: Map IGR 10a to IGR 10b – Burnt House Farm to Stoke Creek Crossing

Key notes on table:

1. Column 2 – an asterisk (*) against the route section number means see also table 10.3.2: 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 10.3.3’ 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
IGR 10a	IGR-10-S001	Public highway	Yes - See table 10.3.3	No	Landward edge of road	Clarity and cohesion	
IGR 10a	IGR-10-S002	Public highway	No	No	Landward edge of road	Clarity and cohesion	
IGR 10a	IGR-10-S003	Not an existing walked route	No	No	Road	Clarity and cohesion	

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
IGR 10a	IGR-10-S004	Public highway	No	No	Road	Clarity and cohesion	
IGR 10a	IGR-10-S005	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Landward edge of pavement	Clarity and cohesion	
IGR 10a	IGR-10-S006	Public bridleway	No	No	Landward edge of path	Clarity and cohesion	
IGR 10a	IGR-10-S007	Public bridleway	No	No	Various	Clarity and cohesion	Various boundaries for landward margin: the edge of the level crossing walkway and edge of track.
IGR 10a	IGR-10-S008*	Other existing walked route	No	No	Landward edge of track	Clarity and cohesion	
IGR 10b	IGR-10-S009	Public bridleway	No	No	Landward edge of track	Clarity and cohesion	
IGR 10b	IGR-10-S010	Public footpath	No	No	Landward edge of track	Clarity and cohesion	
IGR 10b	IGR-10-S011*	Other existing walked route	No	No	Landward edge of track	Clarity and cohesion	

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
IGR 10b	IGR-10-S012*	Public footpath	No	No	Landward edge of track	Clarity and cohesion	
IGR 10b	IGR-10-S013	Public footpath	No	No	Landward edge of track	Clarity and cohesion	
IGR 10b	IGR-10-S014	Public footpath	No	No	Landward edge of road	Clarity and cohesion	
IGR 10b	IGR-10-S015	Public highway	No	No	Landward edge of road	Clarity and cohesion	
IGR 10b	IGR-10-S016	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Landward edge of pavement	Clarity and cohesion	
IGR 10b	IGR-10-S017	Public highway	No	No	Landward edge of verge	Clarity and cohesion	
IGR 10b	IGR-10-S018	Public footpath	No	No	Edge of track	Clarity and cohesion	
IGR 10b	IGR-10-S019	Public footpath	No	No	Various	Clarity and cohesion	Various boundaries for landward margin: the edge of the level crossing walkway and edge of track.

10.3.2 Other options considered: Map IGR 10a to IGR 10b – Burnt House Farm to Stoke Creek Crossing

Map(s)	Route section numbers(s)	Other option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
IGR 10a and IGR 10b	IGR-10-S006 to IGR-10-S019	<p>We considered aligning the trail through the northern part of the Kingsnorth & London Medway Commercial Park to join an existing coastal public footpath (map IGR 10b) that leads towards Stoke Creek Crossing.</p> <p>Different route options were considered within the Commercial Park, using both existing tracks and roads, or a new path around the northern periphery of the Park.</p>	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ it avoids crossing an area of the Commercial Park, including the seawall, where all pedestrian access is specifically prohibited due to a planning condition related to a nearby power station. This condition, made through planning legislation, removes the right to exercise coastal access rights. ■ it mostly maintains long reaching, elevated views of the Medway Estuary, between North Street and Stoke Creek Crossing (map IGR 10b) ■ it provides a safe, mostly off-road trail along existing walked paths and tracks ■ 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.
IGR 10a and IGR 10b	IGR-10-S008 and IGR-10-S011	We considered aligning the trail along the nearby, definitive lines of the public rights of way.	<p>We opted for the proposed routes because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ they follow the existing walked routes, which have developed near the definitive line of the right of way. ■ 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.
IGR 10b	IGR-10-S013 to IGR-10-S019	We considered aligning the trail south-east along an existing public footpath and track, crossing the railway line to join the coastal public footpath.	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Network Rail advised that the level crossing south of Stoke Road was not suitable for pedestrian access due to rail safety concerns. ■ 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.

Map(s)	Route section numbers(s)	Other option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
IGR 10b	IGR-10-S010 to IGR-10-S017	We considered aligning the trail along all/parts of Stoke Road between North Street and Creek Lane (IGR-10-S018).	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ it avoids the fast (60mph limit), rural road as advised by Medway Council Highways. ■ 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.

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.

10.3.3 Roll-back implementation – more complex situations: Map IGR 10a – Burnt House Farm to North Street

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Feature(s) or site(s) potentially affected	Our likely approach to roll-back
IGR 10a	IGR-10-S001	Kingsnorth Quarry	<p>We are aware that stretches of seawall along this low lying coast have been shortlisted for ‘managed re-alignment’ as part of the Medway Estuary and Swale Coastal Flood and Erosion Risk Strategy. The exact locations and timescales are currently being refined, however the trail is likely to be adjusted to follow any new seawall or re-alignment design.</p> <p>In the event that it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of the quarry or any other excepted land (e.g. buildings and curtilage, gardens etc.), we will choose a route that passes landward of it, following discussions with owners and occupiers and relevant experts.</p> <p>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.</p>

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 10.4: Proposals Maps

10.4.1 Map Index

Map reference	Map title
IGR 10a	Burnt House Farm to North Street
IGR 10b	North Street to Stoke Creek Crossing
Directions Map IGR 10A	Directions for Report IGR 10: Burnt House Farm to Stoke Creek Crossing

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
- Motorbike barrier
- Cycle chicane
- Drainage
- Drop-kerb
- Gap in fence
- Hurdle
- Roadside sign
- Interpretation panel
- Ramp
- Revetment
- Stepping stones
- Steps
- Advisory sign

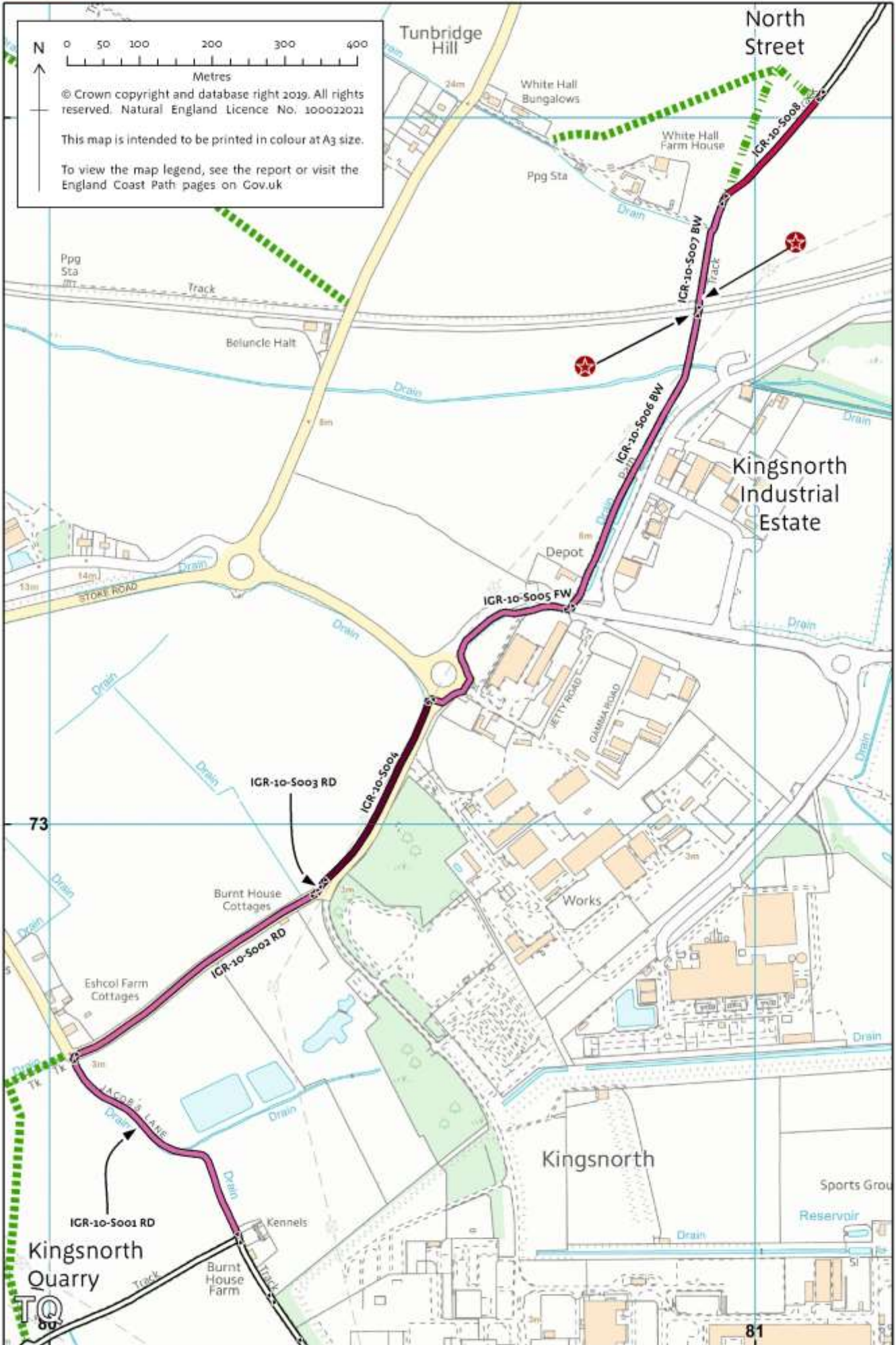
Infrastructure status

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 IGR 10a: Burnt House Farm to North Street



Map IGR 10a: Burnt House Farm to North Street

Directions Map IGR 10A

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.

