



# England Coast Path Stretch: Iwade to Grain

## Report IGR 12: Grain Crossing to Grain Esplanade

### Part 12.1: Introduction

Start Point:	Grain Crossing (Grid reference 586252 175300)
End Point:	Grain Esplanade (Grid reference 588926 177004)
Relevant Maps:	IGR 12a to IGR 12c

12.1.1 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.

12.1.2 This report covers length IGR 12 of the stretch, which is the coast between Grain Crossing and Grain Esplanade 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.

12.1.3 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.

12.1.4 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 12.2: Proposals Narrative

### The trail:

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

12.2.2 A significant inland diversion is necessary between sections IGR-10-S001 and IGR-10-S018 (maps IGR 12a to IGR 12c) to take the trail past industrial land on the Isle of Grain.

12.2.3 Follows the coastline closely between sections IGR-10-S018 and IGR-10-S024, with good views of the Medway Estuary (map IGR 12c).

### 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.

12.2.4 The following designated sites affect this length of coast (see Overview Map C and Map D):

- Medway Estuary and Marshes SPA
- Medway Estuary and Marshes Ramsar site
- Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA
- Thames Estuary and Marshes Ramsar site
- Medway Estuary and Marshes SSSI
- South Thames Estuary and Marshes SSSI
- Medway Estuary Marine Conservation Zone
- Coastal artillery defences on the Isle of Grain Scheduled Monument (SM), immediately east and south east of Grain village.

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

#### 12.2.5 Measures to protect the environment

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Design features of the access proposals	Reason included
IGR 12c	IGR-12-S017 to IGR-12-S024	Where the proposed trail or coastal margin affects the Coastal artillery defences Scheduled Monument, there will be no new infrastructure installed.	To avoid physical damage to the Scheduled Monument.

12.2.6 Natural England is satisfied that the proposals for coastal access in this report are made in accordance with relevant environmental protection legislation. In respect of cultural heritage, we have taken advice from Historic England and others before confirming this conclusion. For more information about how we came to this conclusion; see the following assessments of the access proposals that we have published separately:

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

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

### Accessibility:

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

- The trail would follow an uneven grass path along seawalls;
- There are steps in places where it would be necessary to ascend/descend the seawall (map IGR 12c). There are physical constraints to proposing a replacement ramp here, therefore we will signpost a more direct, step-free route towards Grain Coastal Park, following the High Street.

12.2.8 At Grain Road, near the level crossing, new dropped kerbs will be installed to make the road crossing easier to use. We envisage this happening as part of the physical establishment work described below.

12.2.9 At Grain Esplanade (map IGR 12c), the existing steps will be improved to make 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:

12.2.10 **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.

12.2.11 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.**

12.2.12 **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 12.3.1 below.

12.2.13 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 12.3.1. 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 12.3.1) 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.**

12.2.14 **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 Grain (Medway Estuary).*

12.2.15 Access to the mudflat and saltmarsh in the coastal margin seaward of route sections IGR-12-S001 to IGR-12-S024 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 12A.

12.2.16 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.

12.2.17 These directions will not prevent or affect:

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

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

12.2.18 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 mudflat and saltmarsh.

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

12.2.19 **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.

12.2.20 Column 4 of table 12.3.1 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 12c as the proposed route of the trail.

12.2.21 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 12.3.1, the route is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps IGR 12a to IGR 12c as the proposed route of the trail.

### Other future change:

12.2.22 There are also places described in this report where we foresee the need for future changes to the proposed access provisions.

12.2.23 At the time of preparing the report, we foresee the need for minor changes to the proposed access provisions at the Grain level crossing (map IGR 12a), when Network Rail carries out a planned upgrade. Any such change may require Natural England to prepare a separate variation report to the Secretary of State. The upgrade is scheduled to take place within the next five years.

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

### Establishment of the trail:

12.2.24 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.

12.2.25 Our estimate of the capital costs for physical establishment of the trail on the proposed route is £12,794 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.

12.2.26 There are five main elements to the overall cost:

- A significant number of new signs would be needed on the trail, including a new road safety sign on Grain Road to advise motorists of pedestrians crossing.
- Dropped kerbs are necessary where the trail crosses Grain Road.
- Some resurfacing work is required on the highway pavement at Grain level crossing.
- Timber steps are required to improve access to the seawall at Smithfield Marshes.
- Existing concrete steps will be improved at Grain Esplanade.

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	£4,756
Dropped kerbs	£3,200
Surfacing works	£1,000
Steps	£2,300
Project management	£1,538
<b>Total</b>	<b>£12,794 (Exclusive of any VAT payable)</b>

12.2.27 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:**

12.2.28 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).

12.2.29 We estimate that the annual cost to maintain the trail will be £1,199 (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 12.3: Proposals Tables

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

### 12.3.1 Section Details: Map IGR 12a to IGR 12c – Grain Crossing to Grain Esplanade

Key notes on table:

1. Column 2 – an asterisk (\*) against the route section number means see also table 12.3.2: 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 12.3.3’ 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 12a	IGR-12-S001*	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Landward edge of pavement	Clarity and cohesion	
IGR 12a	IGR-12-S002*	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Various	Clarity and cohesion	Landward boundary of coastal margin includes edge of pavement and railway 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
IGR 12a to IGR 12b	IGR-12-S003*	Other existing walked route	No	No	Landward edge of pavement	Clarity and cohesion	
IGR 12a	IGR-12-S004* to IGR-12-S006*	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Landward edge of pavement	Clarity and cohesion	
IGR 12b	IGR-12-S007* to IGR-12-S008	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Landward edge of pavement	Clarity and cohesion	
IGR 12b	IGR-12-S009 to IGR-12-S010	Public highway	No	No			
IGR 12b	IGR-12-S011 to IGR-12-S012	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Landward edge of pavement	Clarity and cohesion	
IGR 12b to IGR 12c	IGR-12-S013 to IGR-12-S014	Public bridleway	No	No			
IGR 12c	IGR-12-S015	Public bridleway	No	No	Landward edge of track	Clarity and cohesion	
IGR 12c	IGR-12-S016	Public bridleway	No	No	Landward edge of road	Clarity and cohesion	
IGR 12c	IGR-12-S017	Other existing	Yes - See table 12.3.3	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
		walked route					
IGR 12c	IGR-12-S018 to IGR-12-S019	Public footpath	Yes - See table 12.3.3	Yes - bank			
IGR 12c	IGR-12-S020*	Other existing walked route	Yes - See table 12.3.3	Yes - barrier			
IGR 12c	IGR-12-S021	Public footpath	Yes - See table 12.3.3	Yes - barrier			
IGR 12c	IGR-12-S022	Public footpath	Yes - See table 12.3.3	Yes - barrier			
IGR 12c	IGR-12-S023	Public footpath	Yes - See table 12.3.3	Yes - barrier			
IGR 12c	IGR-12-S024	Public footpath	Yes - See table 12.3.3	Yes - barrier			

### 12.3.2 Other options considered: Map IGR 12a to IGR 12c – Grain Crossing to Grain Esplanade

Map(s)	Route section numbers(s)	Other option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
IGR 12a	IGR-12-S001 to IGR-12-S004	We considered aligning the trail along the southern side of the level crossing, over Grain Road to the east of Grain LNG facility.	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ National Grid provided a new walkway across their main Grain LNG entrance to minimise safety issues connected with commercial traffic into the site.</li> <li>■ Medway Highways advised that crossing Grain Road at IGR-12-S001 was more suitable than the potential crossing further to the east of the LNG facility.</li> <li>■ we concluded that overall the proposed route struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme</li> </ul>
IGR 12c	IGR-12-S020	We considered aligning the trail on the existing public right of way which lies landward of the proposed trail. This public footpath runs along the top of a bank.	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ the proposed route is closer to the coast and maintains good views of the Medway Estuary</li> <li>■ the flat esplanade surface avoids some uneven and steep sections of the public footpath</li> <li>■ the proposed route is the more popular walked route</li> <li>■ although it is accessed by steps, the surface offers an easier walking route overall</li> <li>■ the public footpath remains available for people to use</li> <li>■ we concluded that overall the proposed route struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme</li> </ul>

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.

### 12.3.3 Roll-back implementation – more complex situations: Map IGR 12a to IGR 12c – Grain Crossing to Grain Esplanade

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Feature(s) or site(s) potentially affected	Our likely approach to roll-back
IGR 12c	IGR-12-S017 to IGR-12-S024	Coastal artillery defences Scheduled Monument, Grain Coastal Park	<p>If it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of the Scheduled Monument whose designated features are sensitive to public access, or where the existing route already passing through such a site must be altered, we will choose a new route after detailed discussions with the relevant experts and with any potentially affected owners and occupiers, which will either a) continue to pass through the site, if appropriate or b) if necessary, be routed landward of it.</p> <p>If it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of the specified excepted land (e.g. Grain Coastal Park), we will choose a route landward of it, following discussions with owners and occupiers.</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 12.4: Proposals Maps

### 12.4.1 Map Index

Map reference	Map title
IGR 12a	Grain Crossing to Wallend
IGR 12b	Wallend to Grain
IGR 12c	Grain to Grain Esplanade
Directions Map IGR 12A	Directions for Report IGR 12: Grain Crossing to Grain Esplanade

### 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:

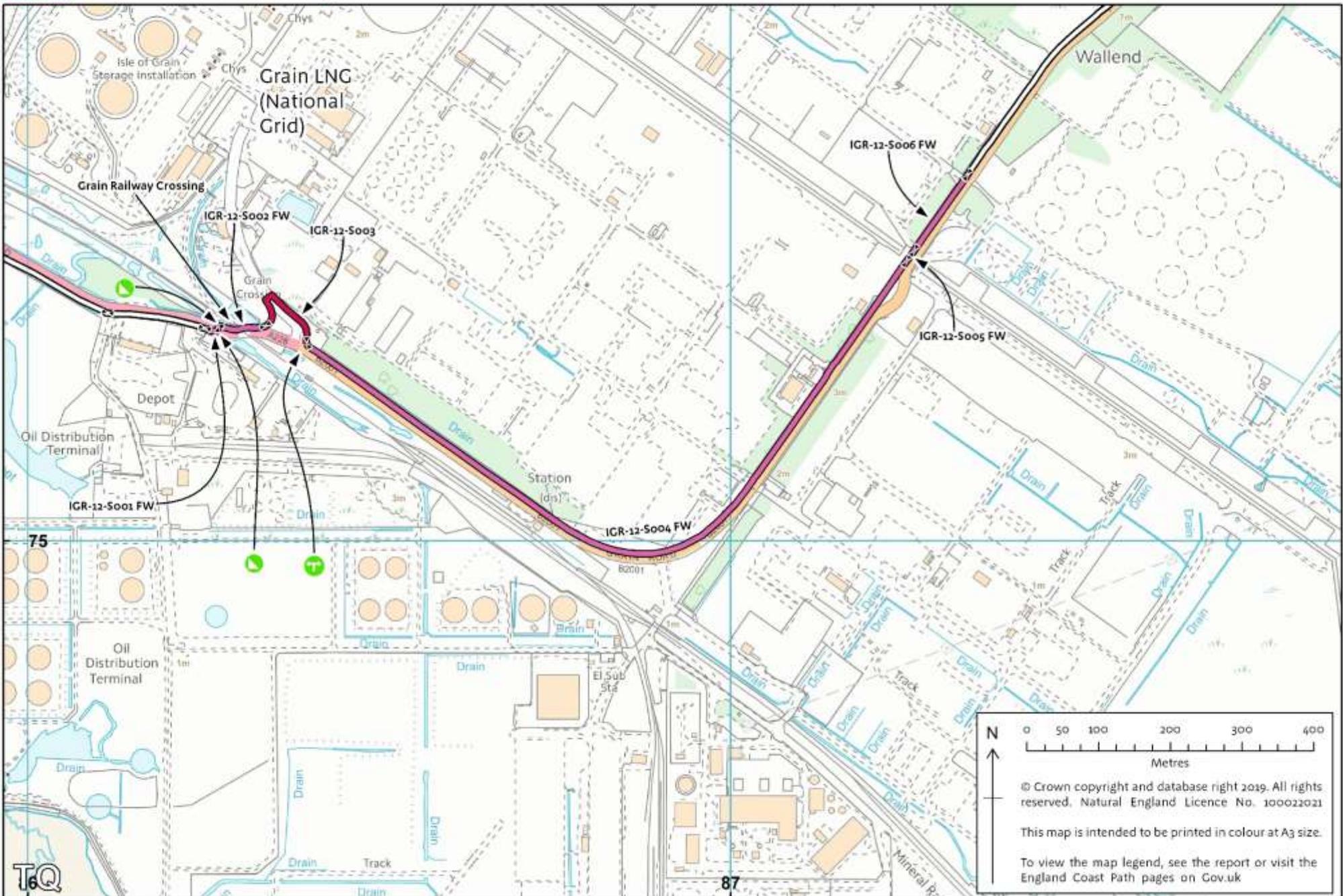
- Barrier
- Boardwalk
- Bollard
- Cattle grid
- Culvert
- Motorbike barrier
- Cycle chicane
- Drainage
- Drop-kerb
- Gap in fence
- Hurdle
- Roadside sign
- Interpretation panel
- Ramp
- Revetment
- Stepping stones
- Steps
- Advisory sign

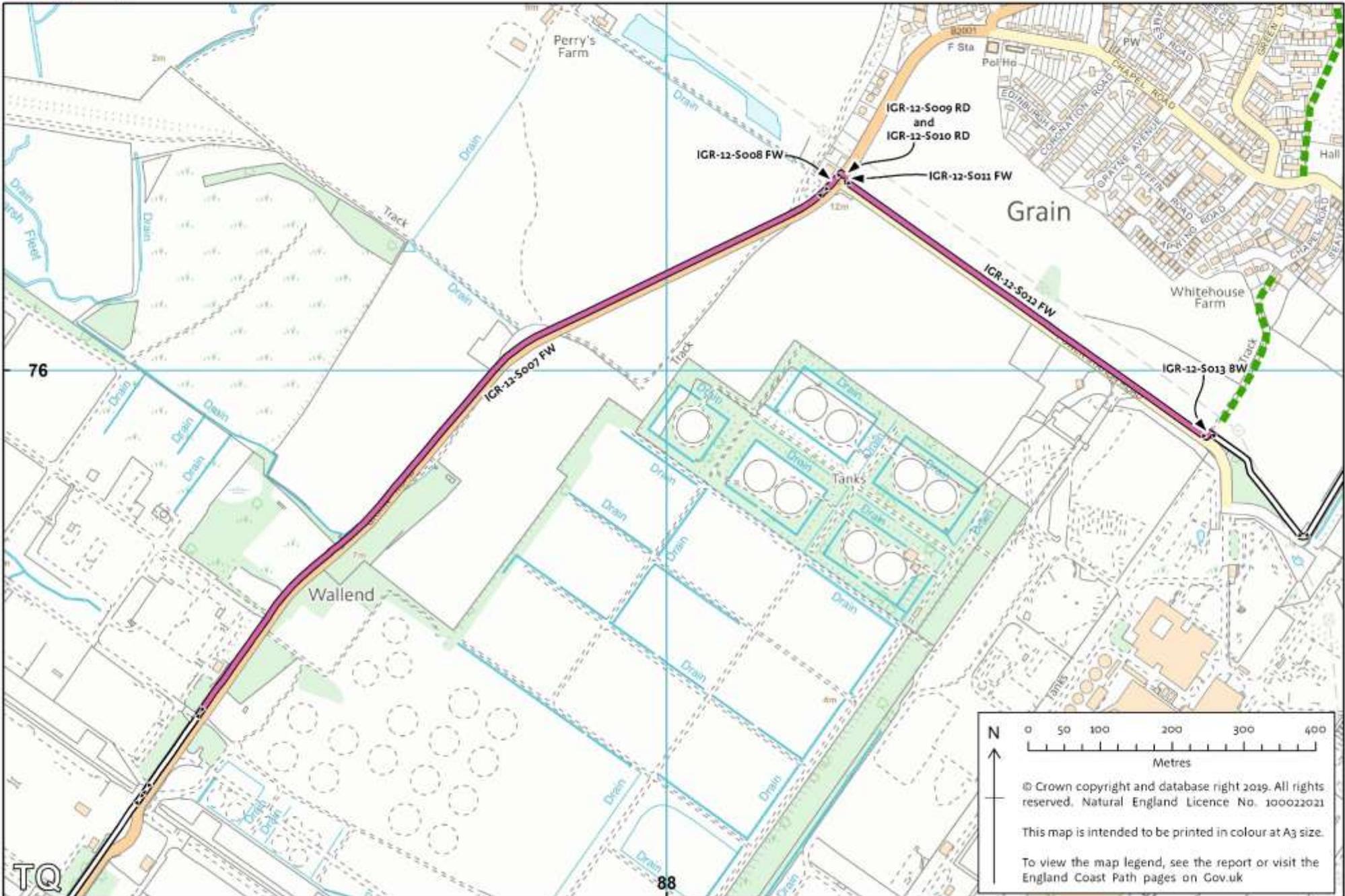
#### Infrastructure status

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.





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



**Directions Map IGR 12A**

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.

