

England Coast Path Stretch: Wallasea Island to Burnham-on-Crouch

Report WIB 3: Hawk Hill Bridge to Clementsgreen Creek

Part 3.1: Introduction

Start Point:	Hawk Hill Bridge, Battlesbridge (Grid reference TQ 7806 9467)
End Point:	Clementsgreen Creek, South Woodham Ferrers (Grid reference TQ 8195 9693)
Relevant Maps:	WIB 3a to WIB 3f

3.1.1 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 Wallasea Island and Burnham-on-Crouch.

3.1.2 This report covers length WIB 3 of the stretch, which is the coast between Hawk Hill Bridge and Clementsgreen Creek. 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.

3.1.3 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.

3.1.4 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 3.2: Proposals Narrative

The trail:

3.2.1 Generally follows existing walked routes, including public rights of way, along most of this length.

3.2.2 Includes inland routes along Maltings Road (WIB-3-S003 to WIB-3-S006, map WIB 3a) and between Gosse's Farm and Woodham Fen Nature Reserve (WIB-3-S010 to WIB-3-S023, maps WIB 3a to 3c) resulting in reduced sea views. This is necessary to pass around excepted land and to utilise the available pedestrian crossing points along the railway line.

3.2.3 From Woodham Fen Nature Reserve to Clements Green Creek, mainly follows the coastline closely with good views of the sea (WIB-3-S025 to WIB-3-S038, maps WIB 3c to 3f).

3.2.4 Includes one section of new path east of Holly Tree Farm to Tabrum's Farm. See maps WIB 3a to WIB 3b and associated tables below for details.

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.

3.2.5 The following designated sites affect this length of coast:

- Crouch and Roach Estuaries SPA
- Crouch and Roach Estuaries Ramsar
- Essex Estuaries SAC
- Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Colne Estuaries MCZ
- Crouch and Roach Estuaries SSSI

3.2.6 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.

3.2.7 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 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:

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

- There are steps on the public right of way at Woods Farm (WIB-3-S007, map WIB3a) as well as at the public right of way footbridge at Fenn Creek (WIB-3-S022, map WIB 3c). As these are on

the public right of way, NE will work with the local authority at establishment to see if they can replace these structures.

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

Where we have proposed exercising statutory discretions:

3.2.9 Estuary: This report proposes that the trail should contain sections aligned on the estuary of the River Crouch, 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 Hawk Hill Bridge (see report WIB 2 for river crossing), as indicated by the extent of the trail shown on map(s) WIB 3a to 3f and Map A2 of the Overview. See part 5 of the Overview for a detailed analysis of the options considered for this estuary and our resulting proposals.

3.2.10 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 3.3.1 below.

3.2.11 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 3.3.1. 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 3.3.1] 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.

3.2.12 Restrictions and/or exclusions: We have proposed to exclude or restrict 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 and flats on the River Crouch Estuary.

3.2.13 Access to the land in the coastal margin adjacent to route sections WIB-3-S001 to WIB-3-S038 is to be excluded all year-round by direction under section 25A the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) as it is mudflat and saltmarsh that 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.

3.2.14 The mudflat along the stretch 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. Areas of saltmarsh are often extensive and have deep channels and creeks, some of which would not be readily apparent to walkers and can pose a significant risk.

3.2.15 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.

3.2.16 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 saltmarsh and flats.

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

3.2.17 **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.

3.2.18 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 WIB 3a to WIB 3f as the proposed route of the trail.

Other future change:

3.2.19 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:

3.2.20 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.

3.2.21 Our estimate of the capital costs for physical establishment of the trail on the proposed route is £34389.77 and is informed by:

- information already held by the access authority, Essex County 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.

3.2.22 There are three main elements to the overall cost:

- Fingerposts and waymarking
- Re-profiling of the slope at WIB-3-S013 (map WIB 3a) to reduce its steepness
- Approximately 1.8km of scrub clearance between sections WIB-3-S013 and WIB-3-S015 (maps WIB 3a and 3b).

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
Fingerposts and waymarking	£8724.17
Advisory Signs	£1180
Drainage, ground levelling, surfacing	£4000
Sets of steps with handrails	£3000
Footbridge with handrails	£2900
Remove old fencing, rubbish & old concrete .	£1500
New fencing	£4200
Scrub clearance	£4000
Environment Agency consent	£400
Project Management	£4485.63
Total	£34389.77 (Exclusive of any VAT payable)

3.2.23 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, Essex 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:

3.2.24 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).

3.2.25 We estimate that the annual cost to maintain the trail will be £6293 (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 3.3: Proposals Tables

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

3.3.1 Section Details: Map(s) WIB 3a to WIB 3f – Hawk Hill Bridge to Clementsgreen Creek

Key notes on table:

1. Column 2 – an asterisk (*) against the route section number means see also table 3.3.2: Other options considered.
2. Column 4 – ‘No’ means no roll-back is proposed for this route section. ‘Yes – normal’ means roll-back is proposed and is likely to follow the current feature (e.g. cliff edge/beach) for the foreseeable future as any coastal change occurs.
3. Column 5a - Certain coastal land types are included automatically in the coastal margin where they fall landward of the trail if they touch it at some point. The relevant land type (foreshore, cliff, bank, barrier, dune, beach, flat or section 15 land – see Glossary) is shown in this column where appropriate. “No” means none present on this route section.
4. Columns 5b and 5c – Any entry in these columns means we are proposing to align the landward boundary of the coastal margin on this route section with the physical feature(s) shown in 5b, for the reason in 5c. No text here means that for this route section the landward edge of the margin would be that of the trail itself - or if any default coastal land type is shown in 5a, that would be its landward boundary instead.

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Current status of route section(s)	Roll-back proposed? (See Part 7 of Overview)	Landward margin contains coastal land type?	Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary proposal	Explanatory notes
3a	WIB-3-S001 FW*	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
3a	WIB-3-S002 RD*	Public highway (road)	No	No			
3a	WIB-3-S003 FW*	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
3a	WIB-3-S004 RD*	Public highway (road)	No	No			
3a	WIB-3-S005 FW*	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
3a	WIB-3-S006 RD*	Public highway (road)	No	No			
3a	WIB-3-S007 FP*	Public footpath	No	No	Various	Clarity and cohesion	Various means fence line & hedgerow

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
3a	WIB-3-S008 FP*	Public footpath	No	No	Various	Clarity and cohesion	Various means fence line & hedgerow
3a	WIB-3-S009*	Other existing walked route	No	No	Track edge	Clarity and cohesion	
3a	WIB-3-S010 FP*	Public footpath	No	No	Track edge	Clarity and cohesion	
3a	WIB-3-S011 FP*	Public footpath	No	No	Track edge	Clarity and cohesion	
3a	WIB-3-S012 FP*	Public footpath	No	No	Track edge	Clarity and cohesion	
3a	WIB-3-S013*	Not an existing walked route	No	No			
3a	WIB-3-S014 RD*	Public highway (road)	No	No			
3b	WIB-3-S015*	Not an existing walked route	No	No			
3b	WIB-3-S016 RD	Public highway (road)	No	No			
3b	WIB-3-S017 FP*	Public footpath	No	No			
3b	WIB-3-S018 FP*	Public footpath	No	No	Path	Clarity and cohesion	Edge of existing right of way on arable field boundary
3b	WIB-3-S019 FP*	Public footpath	No	No	Path	Clarity and cohesion	Edge of existing right of way on arable field boundary
3c	WIB-3-S020FP*	Public footpath	No	No	Path	Clarity and cohesion	Edge of existing right of way on arable field boundary
3c	WIB-3-S021 FP	Public footpath	No	No	Path	Clarity and cohesion	Edge of existing right of way
3c	WIB-3-S022 FP	Public footpath	No	No	Path	Clarity and cohesion	Edge of existing right of way

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
3c	WIB-3-S023 FP	Public footpath	No	No	Path	Clarity and cohesion	Edge of existing right of way
3c	WIB-3-S024 FP	Public footpath	No	No	Path	Clarity and cohesion	Width of pedestrian level crossing
3c	WIB-3-S025 FP	Public footpath	No	No	Path	Clarity and cohesion	Edge of existing right of way
3c	WIB-3-S026 FP	Public footpath	No	No	Path	Clarity and cohesion	Edge of existing right of way
3c	WIB-3-S027 FP	Public footpath	No	No	Path	Clarity and cohesion	Edge of existing right of way
3c	WIB-3-S028 FW	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
3c	WIB-3-S029 FP	Public footpath	No	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	
3d	WIB-3-S030 FP	Public footpath	No	Yes - bank			
3d	WIB-3-S031 FP	Public footpath	No	No	Path	Clarity and cohesion	
3d	WIB-3-S032 RD	Public highway (road)	No	No			
3e	WIB-3-S033 FP	Public footpath	No	No			
3e	WIB-3-S034 FP	Public footpath	No	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	
3e	WIB-3-S035 FP	Public footpath	No	Yes - bank			
3f	WIB-3-S036 FP	Public footpath	No	Yes - bank			
3f	WIB-3-S037	Other existing walked route	No	Yes- bank			
3f	WIB-3-S038 FP	Public footpath	No	Yes - bank			

3.3.2 Other options considered: Maps WIB 3a to 3f

Map(s)	Route section numbers(s)	Other option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
3a	WIB-3-S001 to WIB-3-S007	We considered aligning the trail along the flood bank seaward of our proposed route	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There were privacy issues as the trail would be in an elevated position overlooking gardens and residencies ▪ Excepted land (building and curtilage) at the eastern end of the flood bank prevents an onwards route. ▪ 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.
3a to 3b	WIB-3-S009 to WIB-3-S016	We considered aligning the trail along the floodbank seaward of the proposed route.	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Although alignment along the floodbank would provide good sea views, excepted land at Hayes Farm Caravan Park prevents an onwards route. ▪ It utilises available pedestrian crossing points along the railway line to avoid the excepted land described above. ▪ 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
3a to 3b	WIB-3-S0011 to WIB-3-S016	We considered aligning the trail along the field margins adjacent to and seaward of the railway line	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Although alignment seaward of the railway line would provide sea views, excepted land at Hayes Farm Caravan Park prevents an onwards route. ▪ It utilises available pedestrian crossing points along the railway line

Map(s)	Route section numbers(s)	Other option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
			<p>to avoid the excepted land described above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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
3a to 3c	WIB-3-S012 to WIB-3-S023	We considered utilising the public right of way to cross Burnham Road (landward of WIB-3-S012) and then follow either field edges or public access routes landward of the road.	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The road safety assessment concluded: this is a very busy road subject to average annual daily traffic flows of around 30,000 vehicles making it very difficult to safely cross the road, particularly during peak periods. This could result in pedestrians crossing when it is unsafe to do so, leading to potential collisions between the two user groups ▪ The road safety assessment recommended that pedestrians should not be encouraged to cross the road unless pedestrian refuge islands are provided allowing crossing of the eastbound and westbound traffic lanes to be undertaken separately. Essex County Council indicated that it would be unlikely that permission will be granted for these as the road is so fast and busy. ▪ 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.

Part 3.4: Proposals Maps

3.4.1 Map Index

Map reference	Map title
WIB 3a	Hawk Hill, Battlesbridge to Hayes Farm Caravan Park
WIB 3b	Hayes Farm Caravan Park to Tabrum's Farm
WIB 3c	Tabrum's Farm to sailing club on Fenn Creek
WIB 3d	sailing club on Fenn Creek to Marsh Farm Road
WIB 3e	Marsh Farm Road to Marsh Farm Country Park
WIB 3f	Marsh Farm Country Park to Clementsgreen Creek, South Woodham Ferrers
WIB E3	Directions to exclude/restrict access - as proposed for area covered by Report WIB 3

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:

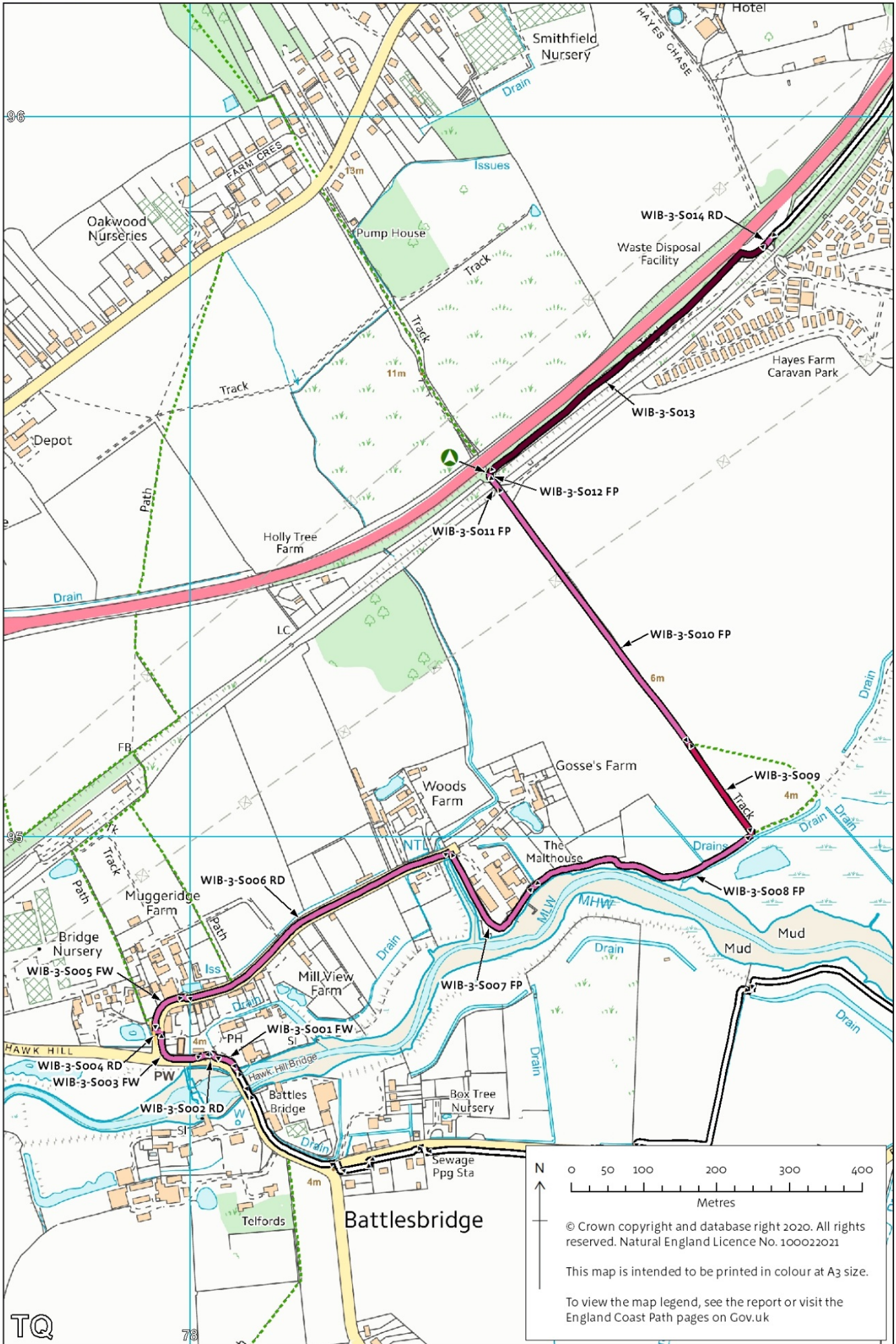
- Barrier
- Boardwalk
- Bollard
- Cattle grid
- Culvert
- Cycle chicane
- Drainage
- Drop-kerb
- Gap in fence
- Hurdle
- Interpretation panel
- Ramp
- Revetment
- Stepping stones
- Steps

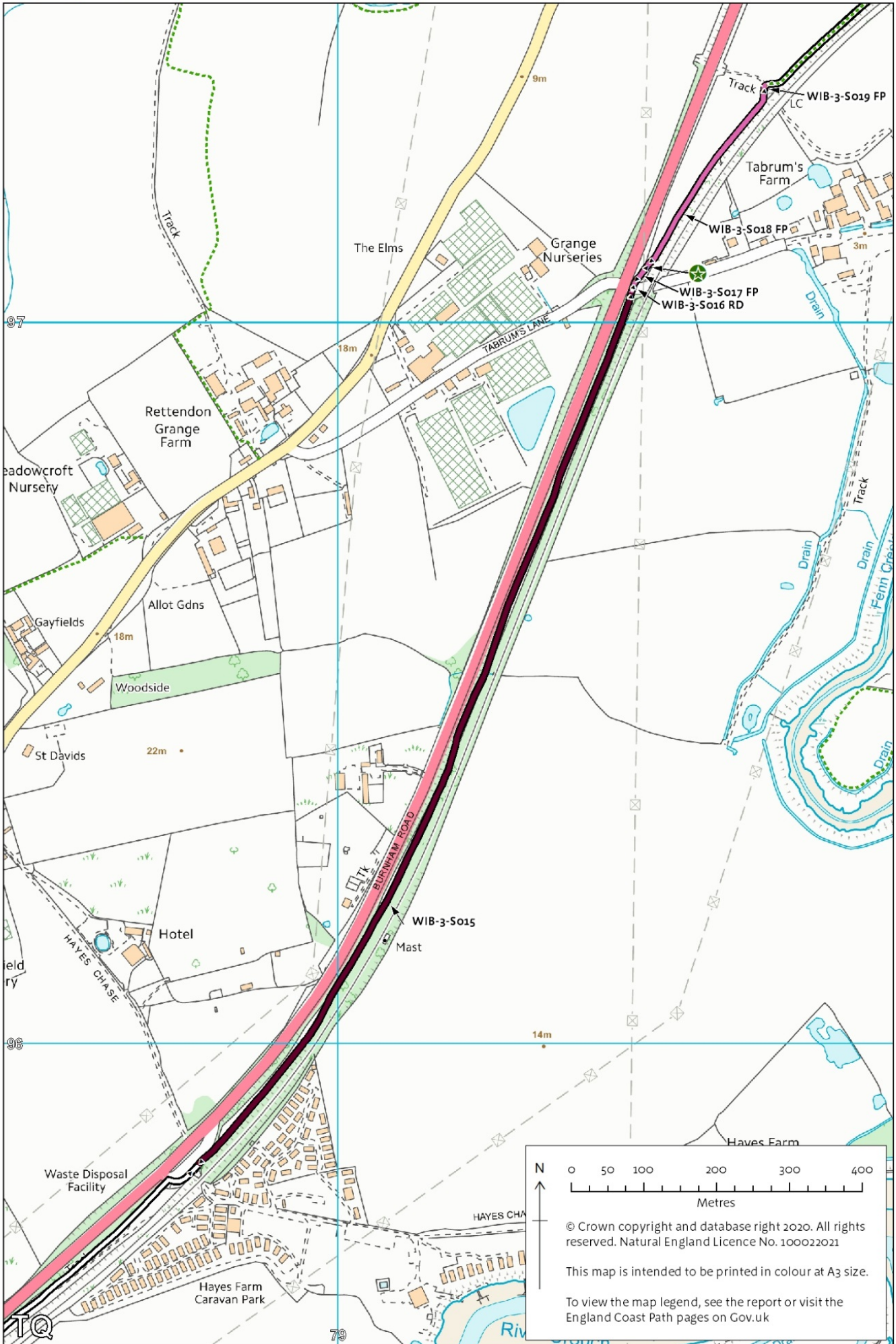
Infrastructure status

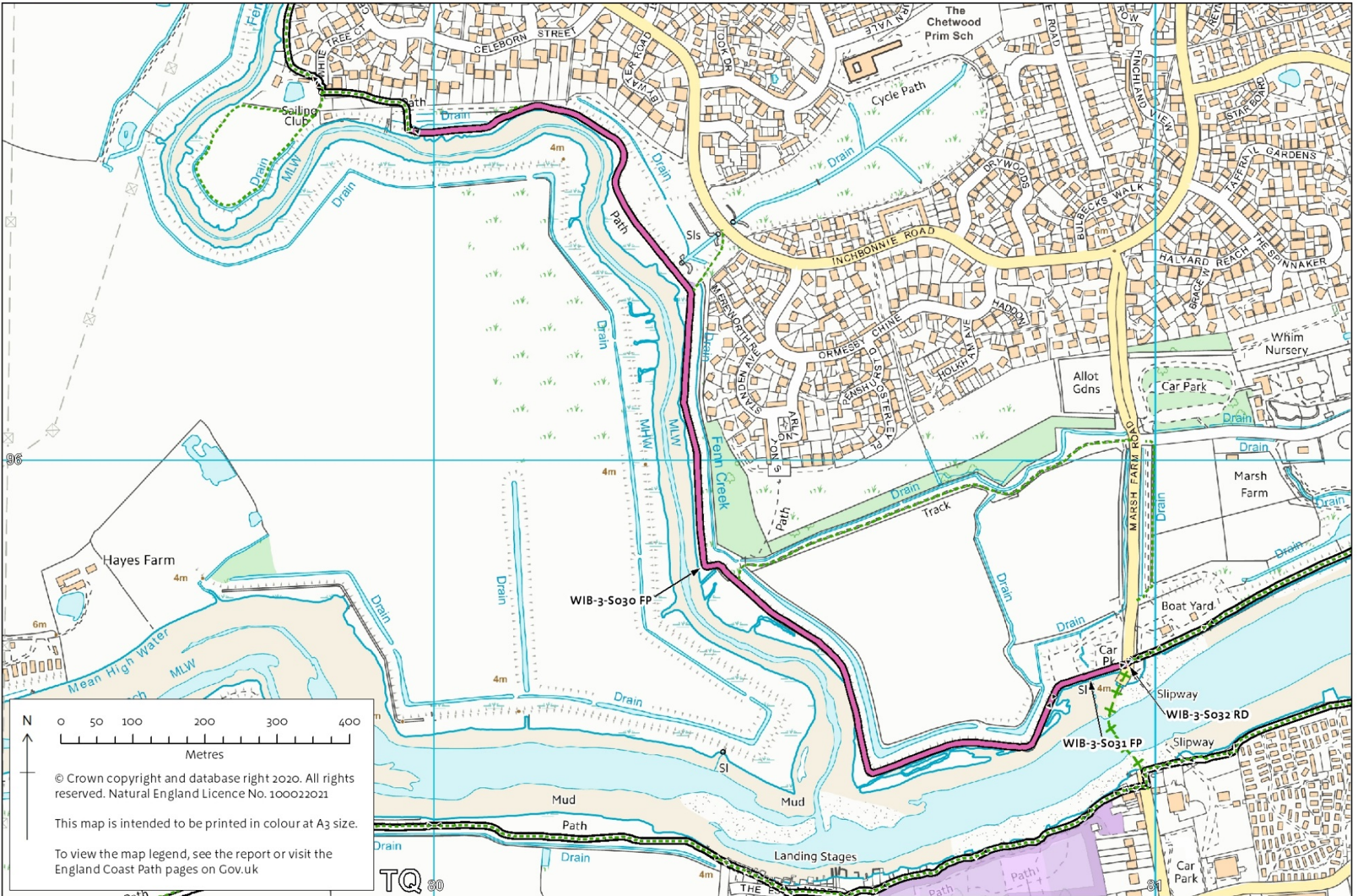
Each symbol shown on the map is colour coded as appropriate, as in this example for a set of steps:

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

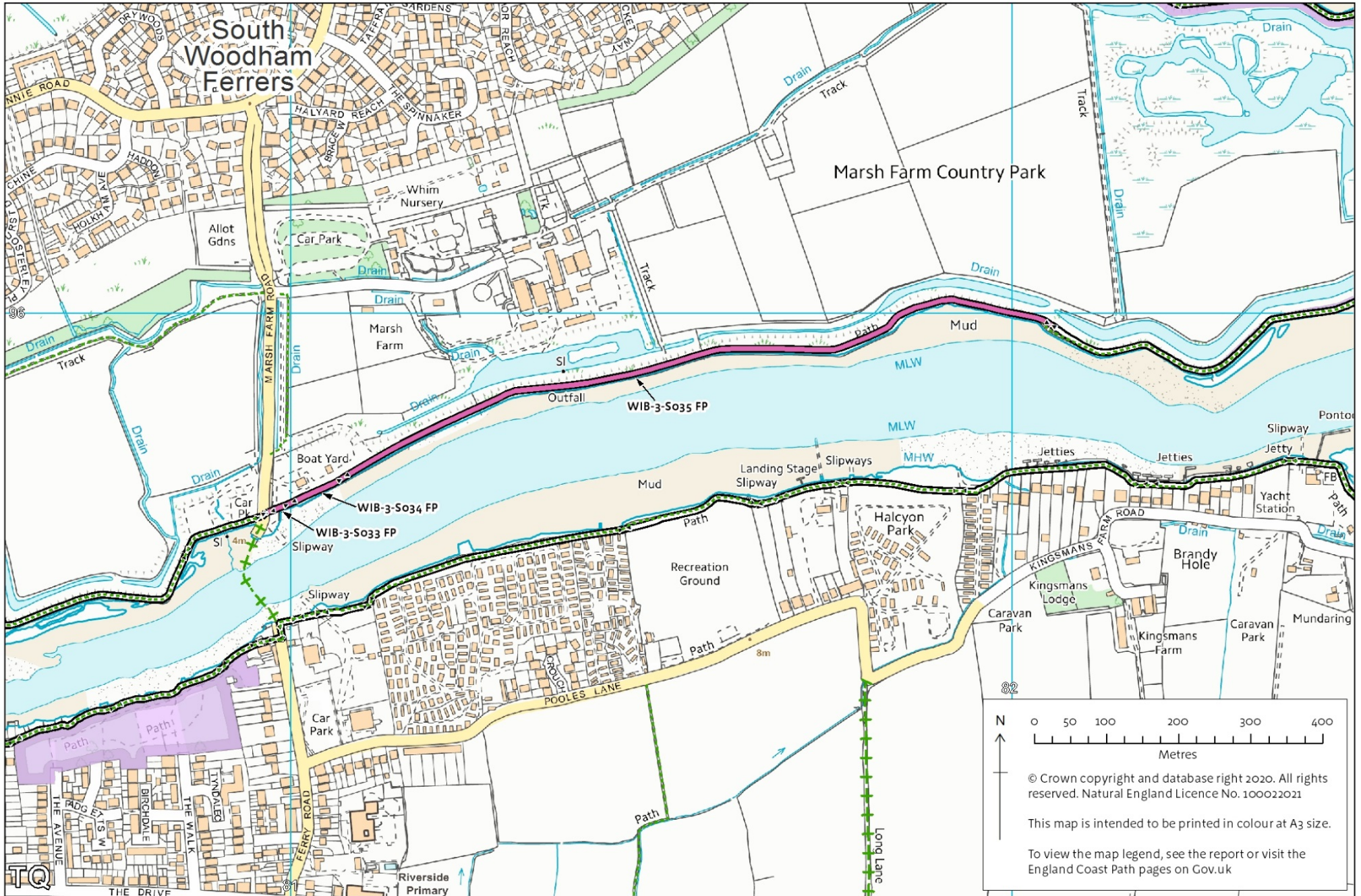
* Please note that the items in this legend may not all be present on an individual map or report.





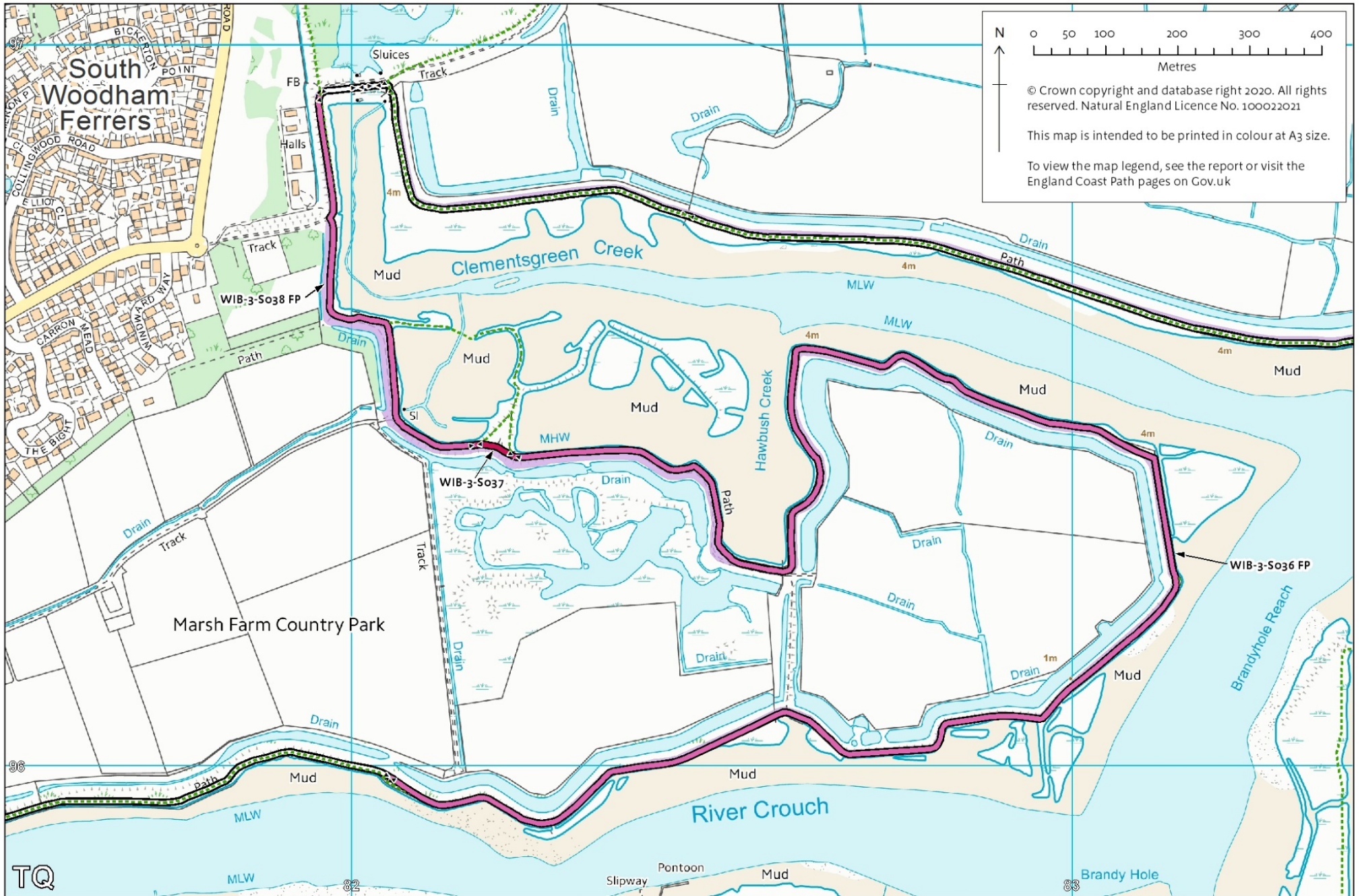


Map WIB 3d - Sailing club on Fenn Creek to Marsh Farm Road

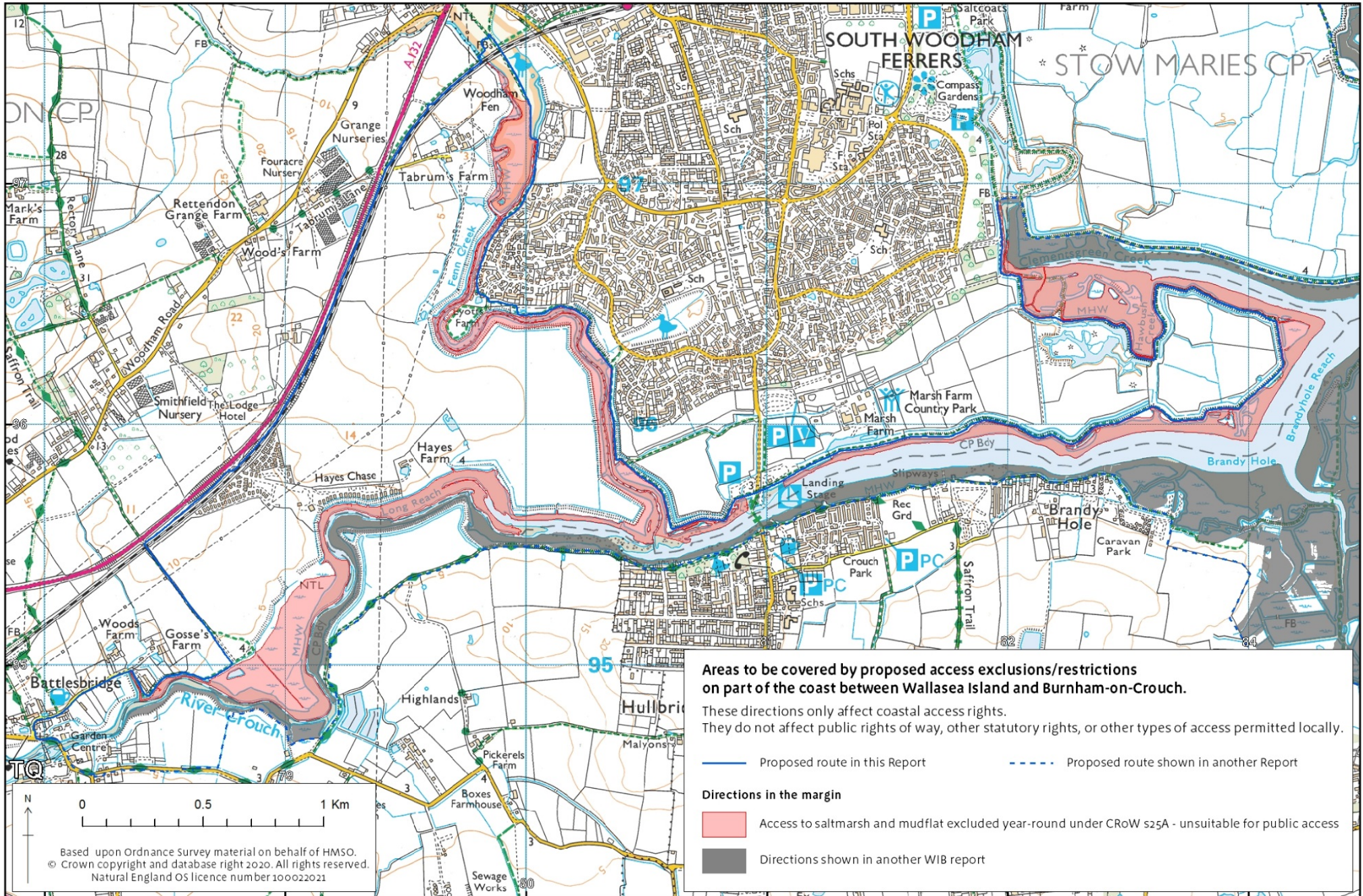


Map WIB 3e - Marsh Farm Road to Marsh Farm Country Park

Map WIB 3f - Marsh Farm Country Park to Clementsgreen Creek, South Woodham Ferrers



Map WIB E3: Directions to exclude/restrict access - as proposed for area covered by Report WIB 3



Map WIB E3: Directions to exclude/restrict access - as proposed for area covered by Report WIB 3