

England Coast Path Stretch:

Wallasea Island to Burnham-on-Crouch

Report WIB 4: Clementsgreen Creek, South Woodham Ferrers to The Quay, North Fambridge

Part 4.1: Introduction

Start Point:	Clementsgreen Creek, South Woodham Ferrers (Grid reference TQ 8195 9693)
End Point:	The Quay, North Fambridge (Grid reference TQ 8526 9651)
Relevant Maps:	WIB 4a to WIB 4d

4.1.1 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.

4.1.2 This report covers length WIB 4 of the stretch, which is the coast between Clementsgreen Creek and The Quay. 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.

4.1.3 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.

4.1.4 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 4.2: Proposals Narrative

The trail:

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

4.2.1 Includes one section of new path between Little Hayes Chase and Upper Grooms Farm. See map WIB 4c and associated tables below for details.

4.2.2 Between Clementsgreen Creek and Little Hayes Farm the trail follows the coastline quite closely and maintains good views of the estuary, WIB-4-S001 to WIB-4-S006, (maps WIB 4a and WIB 4b). Between Little Hayes Farm and Riverside Cottages a waterside alignment is prevented by existing land uses and landforms, however our trail (WIB-4-S006 to WIB-4-S025, maps WIB 4b to WIB 4d) still offers views across the extensive coastal landscape to the sea beyond. The trail follows the coastline closely between Riverside Cottages and The Quay with good views of the estuary (WIB-4-S026, map WIB 4d).

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.

4.2.3 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

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

4.2.4 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.

4.2.5 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:

4.2.6 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 the trail would follow an uneven grass path.

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

Where we have proposed exercising statutory discretions:

4.2.7 **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 4a to 4d 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.

4.2.8 **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 4.3.1 below.

4.2.9 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 4.3.1. 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 4.3.1] 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.

4.2.10 **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

4.2.11 Access to the land in the coastal margin adjacent to route sections WIB-4-S001 to WIB-4-S026 is to be excluded all year-round by direction under section 25A of 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.

4.2.12 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.

4.2.13 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.

4.2.14 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.

4.2.15 **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.

4.2.16 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 4a to WIB 4d as the proposed route of the trail.

Other future change:

4.2.17 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:

4.2.18 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.

4.2.19 Our estimate of the capital costs for physical establishment of the trail on the proposed route is £15691.68 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.

4.2.20 There are two main elements to the overall cost:

- Finger posts and waymarking throughout
- New pedestrian gates and a footbridge between Little Hayes Farm and Upper Grooms Farm, Map WIB 4c, where new access is being created.

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 & interpretation	£6429.73
Gates	£5685.21
Footbridge	£1130
Environment Agency consent	£400
Project Management	£2046.74
Total	£15691.68 (Exclusive of any VAT payable)

4.2.21 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:

4.2.22 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).

4.2.23 We estimate that the annual cost to maintain the trail will be £3537 (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 4.3: Proposals Tables

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

4.3.1 Section Details: Map(s) WIB 4a to WIB 4d – Clementsgreen Creek to The Quay

Key notes on table:

1. Column 2 – an asterisk (*) against the route section number means see also table 4.3.2: 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
4a	WIB-4-S001	Other existing walked route	No	Yes - bank			
4a	WIB-4-S002	Other existing walked route	No	Yes - bank			
4a	WIB-4-S003	Other existing walked route	No	Yes - bank			
4a	WIB-4-S004 FP	Public footpath	No	Yes - bank			
4a & 4b	WIB-4-S005 FP	Public footpath	No	Yes - bank			
4b	WIB-4-S006* FP	Public footpath	No	No			
4c	WIB-4-S007* FP	Public footpath	No	No			
4c	WIB-4-S008* RD	Public highway (road)	No	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
4c	WIB-4-S009*	Other existing walked route	No	No			Occasional overlap with right of way, but this is often obscured or passes through pond.
4c	WIB-4-S010* FP	Public footpath	No	No	Path	Clarity and cohesion	Width of public right of way
4c	WIB-4-S011*	Not an existing walked route	No	No	Path	Clarity and cohesion	1.5m width of trail to be established on field edge
4c	WIB-4-S012*	Not an existing walked route	No	No	Path/edge of bridge	Clarity and cohesion	1.5m width of trail to be established
4c	WIB-4-S013*	Not an existing walked route	No	No	Path	Clarity and cohesion	1.5m width of trail to be established on field edge
4c	WIB-4-S014*	Not an existing walked route	No	No			
4c	WIB-4-S015* RD	Public highway (road)	No	No			
4d	WIB-4-S016* BW	Public bridleway	No	No			
4d	WIB-4-S017* BW	Public bridleway	No	No			
4d	WIB-4-S018* FP	Public footpath	No	No			
4d	WIB-4-S019* FP	Public footpath	No	No			
4d	WIB-4-S020* FP	Public footpath	No	No			
4d	WIB-4-S021 FP	Public footpath	No	No			
4d	WIB-4-S022 RD	Public highway (road)	No	No			
4d	WIB-4-S023 RD	Public highway (road)	No	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
4d	WIB-4-S024 FW	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
4d	WIB-4-S025 RD	Public highway (road)	No	No			
4d	WIB-4-S026 FP	Public footpath	No	Yes - bank			

4.3.2 Other options considered: Maps WIB 4b to 4d and 4c

Map(s)	Route section numbers(s)	Other option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
4b to 4d	WIB-4-S006 to WIB-4-S020	We considered aligning the trail seaward of the railway line.	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The railway line embankment is also the flood defence structure, bounded by tidally inundated saltmarsh. There was therefore no land available seaward on which to establish a safe and convenient trail. ■ The saltmarsh and flats in this area are within the Crouch Estuary SPA and Ramsar, and although not investigated further as the land was not suitable for public access (S25A restriction applies) it is anticipated any alignment along here would have caused significant disturbance to the birdlife. ■ It utilises existing rights of way, readily links land uses over several properties and generally follows a permitted route for an annual long distance running event. ■ This proposal is made with the support of one of the landowners ■ 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
4c	WIB-4-S007 to WIB-4-S013	We considered aligning the trail in fields adjacent to the railway line on its northern side	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Gardens adjacent to WIB-4-S007 extend to the railway boundary preventing a link to the level crossing at WIB-4-S006 (map WIB 4b) ■ A new route around the northern perimeter of the excepted land described above will result in increased privacy issues for the dwelling as it would have created new access on 2 sides. The dwelling has a right of way on one side and the considered route would have created access on three sides.

Map(s)	Route section numbers(s)	Other option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ It utilises existing rights of way, readily links land uses over several properties and generally follows a permitted route for an annual long distance running event. ■ this proposal is made with the support of one of the landowners ■ The seasonally water logged fields adjoining the north of the railway are known to provide habitat for birds that are features of the adjacent River Crouch SPA and Ramsar. ■ 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 4.4: Proposals Maps

4.4.1 Map Index

Map reference	Map title
WIB 4a	Clementsgreen Creek, South Woodham Ferrers to Stow Creek
WIB 4b	Stow Creek to Little Hayes Farm
WIB 4c	Little Hayes Farm to The Old Rectory, North Fambridge
WIB 4d	The Old Rectory, North Fambridge to The Quay, North Fambridge
WIB E4	Directions to exclude/restrict access - as proposed for area covered by Report WIB 4

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:

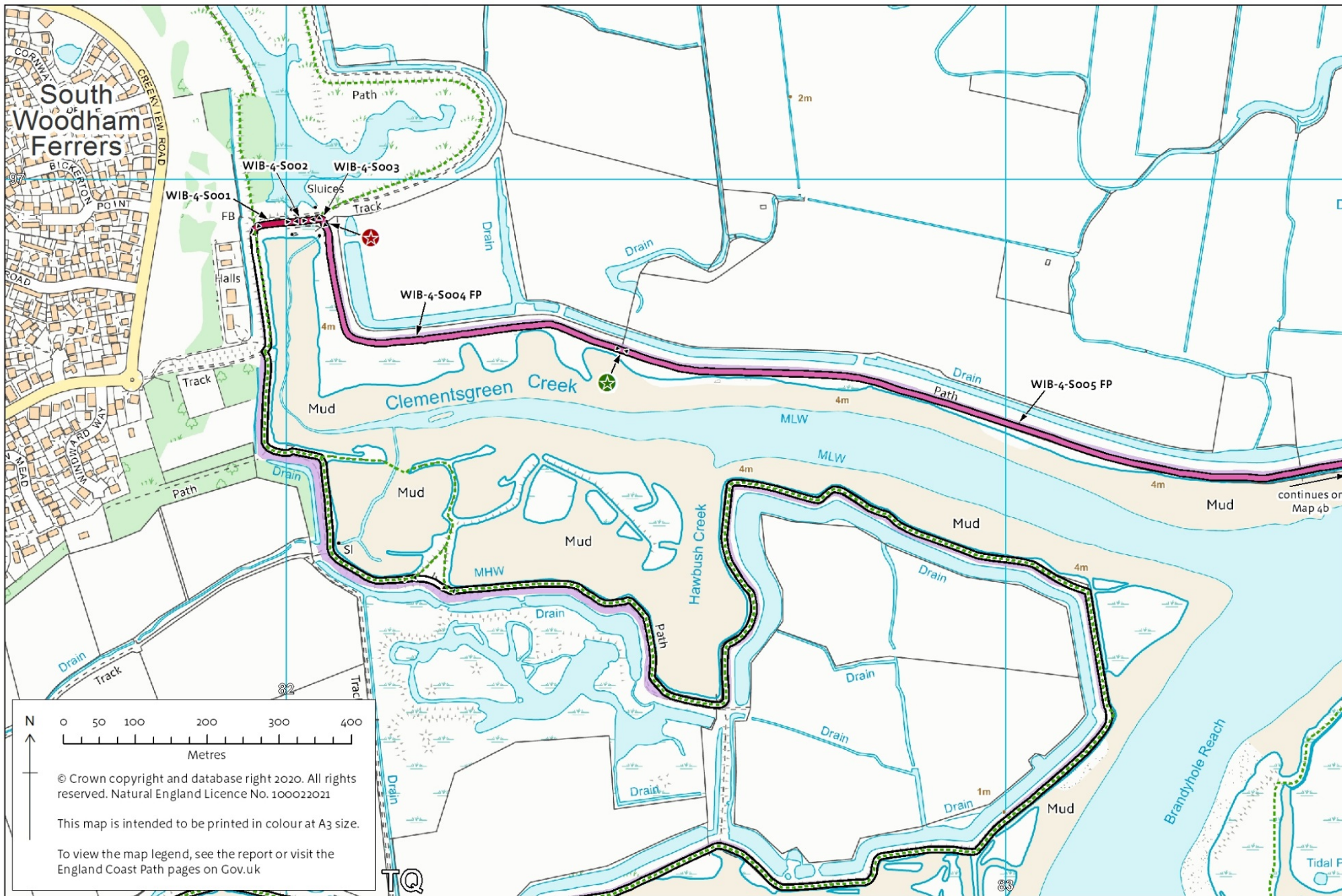
- Barrier
- Boardwalk
- Bollard
- Cattle grid
- Culvert
- Cycle chicane
- Drainage
- Drop-kerb
- Gap in fence
- Hurdle
- Interpretation panel
- Ramp
- Revetment
- Stepping stones
- Steps

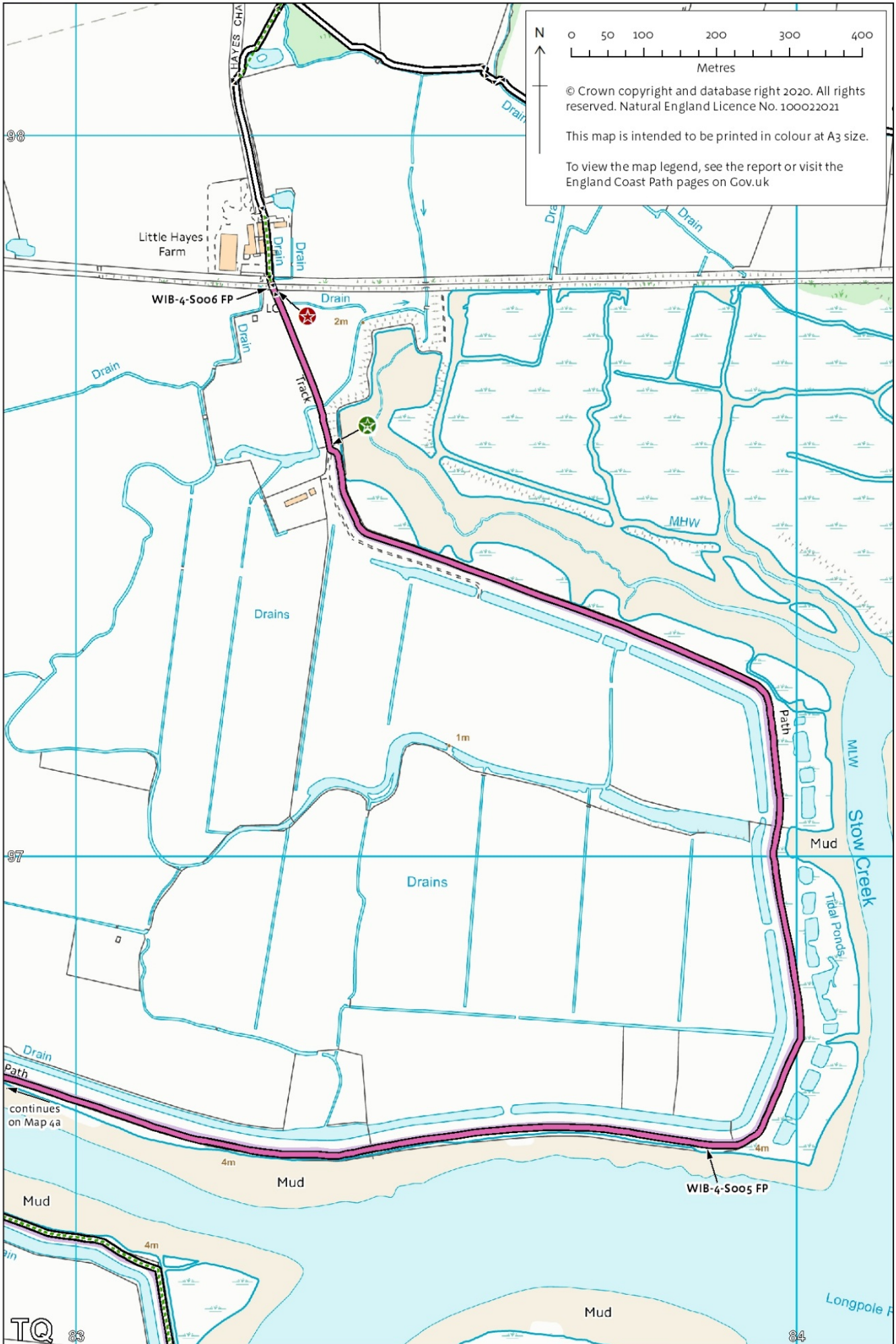
Infrastructure status

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

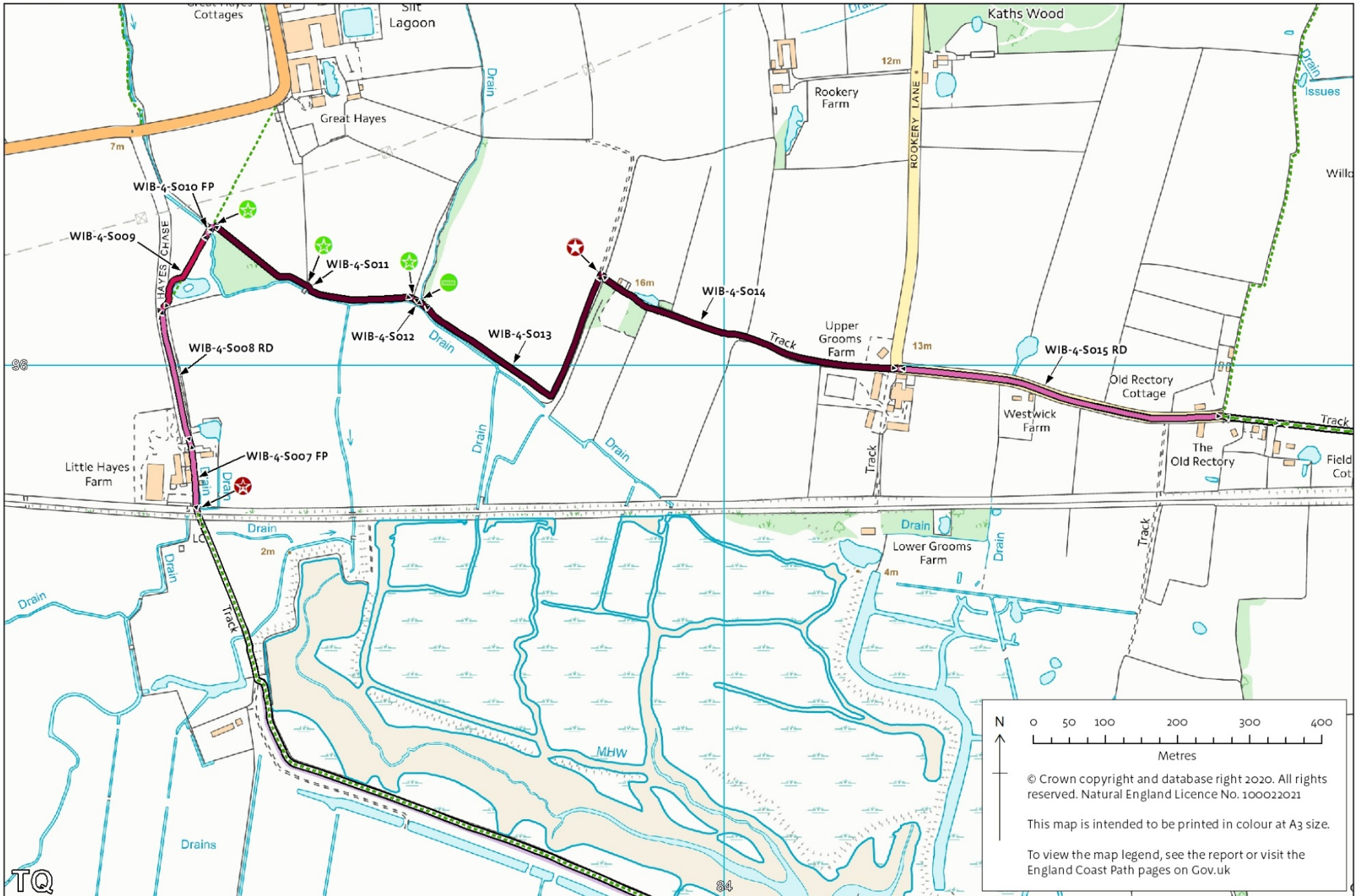
* Please note that the items in this legend may not all be present on an individual map or report.





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 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

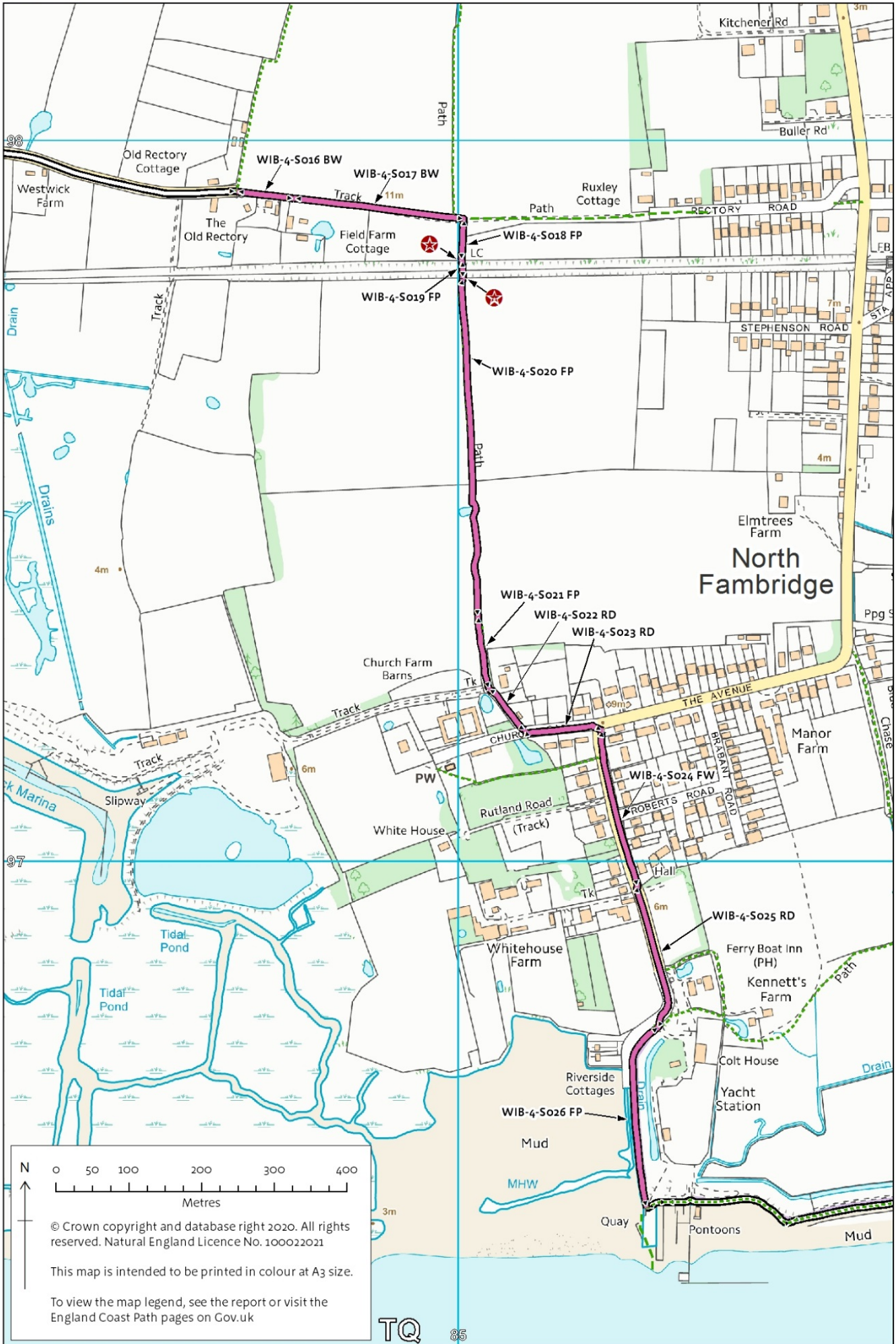
Map WIB 4b - Stow Creek to Little Hayes Farm



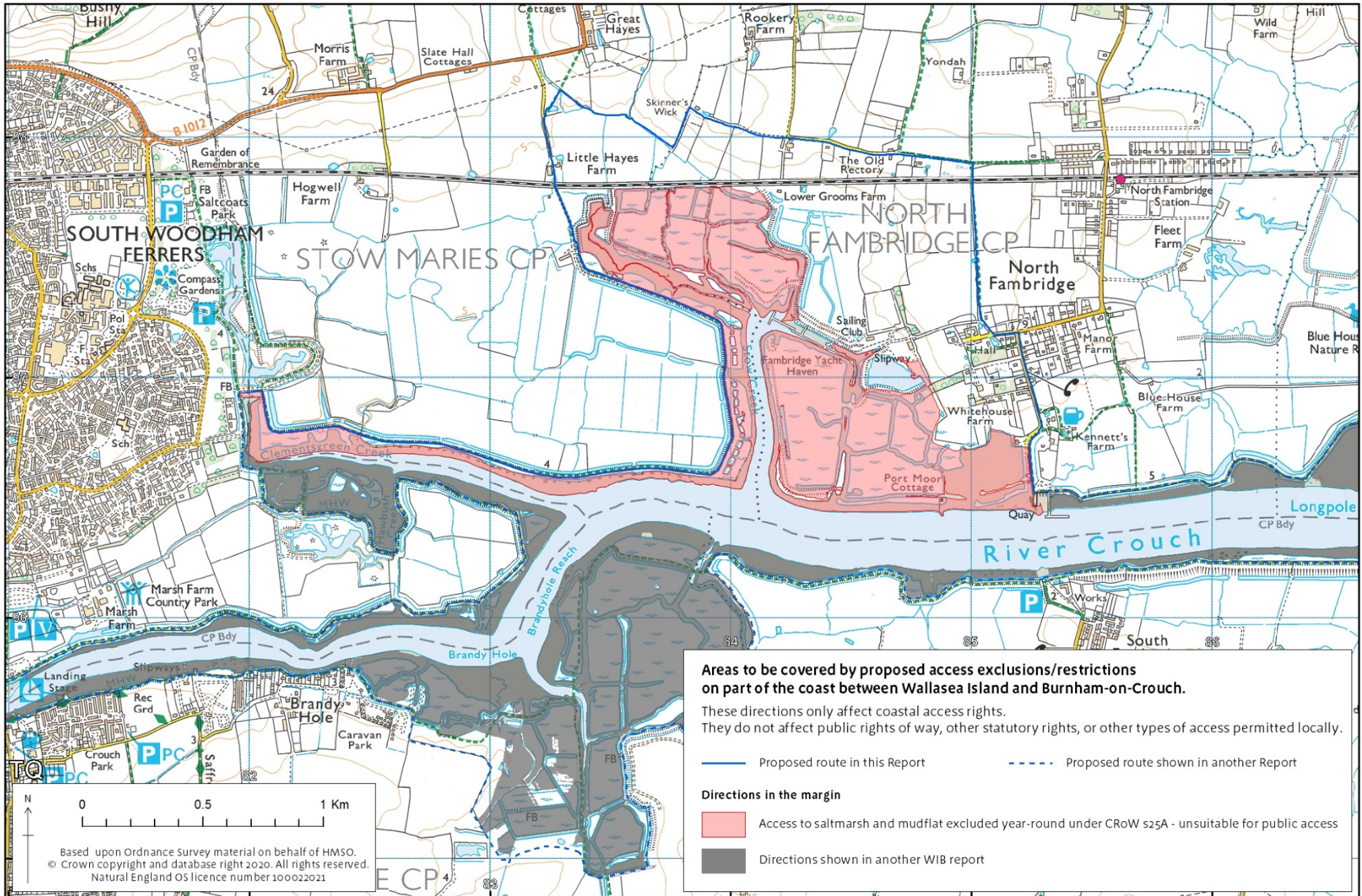
Map WIB 4c - Little Hayes Farm to The Old Rectory, North Fambridge

Map WIB 4d - The Old Rectory, North Fambridge to The Quay, North Fambridge

Map WIB 4d - The Old Rectory, North Fambridge to The Quay, North Fambridge



Map WIB E4: Directions to exclude/restrict access - as proposed for area covered by Report WIB 4



Map WIB E4: Directions to exclude/restrict access - as proposed for area covered by Report WIB 4