



England Coast Path Stretch: Tilbury to Southend-on-Sea

Report TSE 5: Ferry Road, Benfleet to Barge Pier, Shoeburyness

Part 5.1: Introduction

Start Point:	Ferry Road, Benfleet (Grid reference TQ 7799 8570)
End Point:	Barge Pier, Shoeburyness (Grid reference TQ 9311 8396)
Relevant Maps:	TSE 5a to TSE 5k

5.1.1 This is one of a series of linked but legally separate reports published by Natural England under section 51 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, which make proposals to the Secretary of State for improved public access along and to this stretch of coast between Tilbury and Southend-on-Sea

5.1.2 This report covers length TSE 5 of the stretch, which is the coast between Ferry Road, Benfleet and Barge Pier, Shoeburyness. It makes free-standing statutory proposals for this part of the stretch, and seeks approval for them by the Secretary of State in their own right under section 52 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

5.1.3 The report explains how we propose to implement the England Coast Path (“the trail”) on this part of the stretch, and details the likely consequences in terms of the wider ‘Coastal Margin’ that will be created if our proposals are approved by the Secretary of State. Our report also sets out:

- any proposals we think are necessary for restricting or excluding coastal access rights to address particular issues, in line with the powers in the legislation; and
- any proposed powers for the trail to be capable of being relocated on particular sections (“roll-back”), if this proves necessary in the future because of coastal change.

5.1.4 There is also a single Overview document for the whole of this stretch of coast, explaining common principles and background. **This and the other individual reports relating to the stretch should be read in conjunction with the Overview. The Overview explains, among other things, how we have considered any potential environmental impacts of improving public access to this part of the coast, and this report, and other separately published assessments we refer to, then provides more detail on these aspects where appropriate.**

Part 5.2: Proposals Narrative

The trail:

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

5.2.1 Mainly follows the coastline quite closely and maintains good views of the sea.

Protection of the environment:

In this part of the report, we explain how we have taken account of environmental protection objectives in developing our proposals for improved coastal access.

5.2.2 The following designated sites affect this length of coast:

- Benfleet & Southend Marshes Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Benfleet and Southend Marshes Ramsar site
- Benfleet and Southend Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

5.2.3 We consider that the coastal environment, including features of the sites listed above, along this length of coast is unlikely to be sensitive to the improvements to coastal access envisaged and that no special measures are needed in respect of our proposals.

5.2.4 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:

5.2.5 There are a 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 or bare soil path in places
- There are steps in places in one location on the south side of Two Tree Island where there is a significant change in ground level (TSE-5-S020)
- There are kissing gates along the seawall between Benfleet and Leigh where it is necessary to provide a barrier to contain livestock

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

Where we have proposed exercising statutory discretions:

5.2.6 Estuary This report proposes that the trail should contain sections aligned on the estuary of the River Thames, extending upstream from the open coast. Natural England proposes to exercise its functions as if the sea included the estuarial waters of that river as far as the Tilbury to Gravesend ferry, as indicated by the extent of the trail shown on map TSE 1a.

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

5.2.7 Landward boundary of the coastal margin: We have used our discretion on some sections of the route to map the landward extent of the coastal margin to an adjacent physical boundary such as a fence line, pavement or track to make the extent of the new access rights clearer. See Table 5.3.1 below.

5.2.8 At Hadleigh Marsh (TSE-5-S003 and TSE-5-S004, and TSE-5-S023 and TSE-5-S024) we have used this discretion to limit the landward extent of the coastal margin to the landward top edge of the seawall. This has had the effect of reducing the amount of coastal margin that would have otherwise been available by default. This option provides the most clarity because there is no clear boundary feature at the bottom of the seawall that could mark the boundary of the coastal margin, but the break in slope provides an easily identifiable boundary for access users.

5.2.9 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 TSE 5b and TSE 5c of table 5.3.1. Where these columns are left blank, we are making no such proposals, so the default landward boundary applies. See the note relating to Columns 5b & 5c above Table 5.3.1 explaining what this means in practice.

See also part 3 of the Overview - ‘Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps’, for a more detailed explanation of the default extent of the coastal margin and how we may use our discretion to adjust the margin, either to add land or to provide clarity.

5.2.10 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 for most of the extent of this report.

5.2.11 Access to the saltmarsh/flat in the coastal margin seaward of route sections TSE-5-S001FP to TSE-5-S040FP (part) is to be excluded all year-round by direction under s25A 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.

5.2.12 The mudflat around 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.

5.2.13 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.

5.2.14 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 to which new users of the land would be subject because of the local patterns of tidal inundation.

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

5.2.15 **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.

5.2.16 Column 4 of table 5.3.1 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 maps TSE 5a to TSE 5k as the proposed route of the trail.

5.2.17 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.

Other future change:

5.2.18. 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:

5.2.19 Below we summarise how our proposed route for the trail would be physically established to make it ready for public use before any new rights come into force.

Establishment works will only start on this length of coast once these proposals have been approved by the Secretary of State. The works may therefore either precede or follow the start of establishment works on other lengths of coast within the stretch, and detailed in their separate reports.

5.2.20 Our estimate of the capital costs for physical establishment of the trail on the proposed route is £22,794 and is informed by:

- information already held by the access authority, Essex County Council and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
- the conclusions of our deliberations in relation to potential impacts on the environment; and

- information gathered while visiting affected land and talking to the people who own and manage it about the options for the route.

5.2.21 The main elements to the overall cost are :

- New signposts and waymarking to clearly indicate the trail route.

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	£19,821
Project management	£2,973
Total	£22,794 (Exclusive of any VAT payable)

5.2.22 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, there will be suitable liaison with affected land owners and occupiers about relevant aspects of the design, installation and maintenance of the new signs and infrastructure that are needed on their land. Prior to works being carried out on the ground, all necessary permissions, authorisations and consents will be obtained. All such works would conform to the published standards for National Trails and the other criteria described in our Coastal Access Scheme.

Maintenance of the trail:

5.2.23 Because the trail on this length of coast will form part of the National Trail being created around the whole coast of England called the England Coast Path, we envisage that it will be maintained to the same high quality standards as other National Trails in England (see The New Deal; Management of National Trails in England from April 2013: details at Annex A of the Overview).

5.2.24 We estimate that the annual cost to maintain the trail will be £5732.68 (exclusive of any VAT payable). In developing this estimate we have taken account of the formula used to calculate Natural England’s contribution to the maintenance of other National Trails.

Part 5.3: Proposals Tables

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

5.3.1 Section Details – Maps TSE 5a to TSE 5k: Ferry Road, Benfleet to Barge Pier, Shoeburyness

Key notes on table:

1. Column 2 – an asterisk (*) against the route section number means see also table 5.3.2: Other options considered.
2. Column 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
TSE 5a	TSE-5-S001FP	Public footpath	Yes - normal	No			
TSE 5a	TSE-5-S002FP	Public footpath	Yes - normal	No			
TSE 5b	TSE-5-S003FP	Public footpath	Yes - normal	Yes - bank	landward edge of top of seawall	Clarity and cohesion	
TSE 5c	TSE-5-S004FP	Public footpath	Yes - normal	Yes - bank	landward edge of top of seawall	Clarity and cohesion	
TSE 5d	TSE-5-S005FP	Public footpath	Yes - normal	No			
TSE 5d	TSE-5-S006RD*	Public highway	Yes - normal	No			
TSE 5d	TSE-5-S007RD*	Public highway	Yes - normal	No			
TSE 5d	TSE-5-S008FW*	Public footway (pavement)	Yes - normal	No			
TSE 5d	TSE-5-S009*	Other existing walked route	Yes - normal	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
TSE 5d	TSE-5-S010*	Not an existing walked route	Yes - normal	No			
TSE 5d	TSE-5-S011*	Not an existing walked route	Yes - normal	No			
TSE 5d	TSE-5-S012RD*	Public highway	Yes - normal	No			
TSE 5d	TSE-5-S013*	Other existing walked route	Yes - normal	No			
TSE 5d	TSE-5-S014*	Other existing walked route	Yes - normal	No			
TSE 5d	TSE-5-S015*	Other existing walked route	Yes - normal	No			
TSE 5d	TSE-5-S016*	Other existing walked route	Yes - normal	No			
TSE 5d	TSE-5-S017*	Other existing walked route	Yes - normal	No			
TSE 5d	TSE-5-S018*	Not an existing walked route	Yes - normal	No			
TSE 5d	TSE-5-S019RD*	Public highway	Yes - normal	No			
TSE 5d	TSE-5-S020*	Other existing walked route	Yes - normal	No			
TSE 5d	TSE-5-S021*	Other existing walked route	Yes - normal	No			
TSE 5d	TSE-5-S022*	Other existing walked route	Yes - normal	No			
TSE 5d	TSE-5-S023FP	Public footpath	No	Yes	landward edge of top of seawall	Clarity and cohesion	
TSE 5e	TSE-5-S024FP	Public footpath	No	Yes	landward edge of top of seawall	Clarity and cohesion	
TSE 5e	TSE-5-S025RD	Public highway	No	No	Pavement edge		
TSE 5e	TSE-5-S026*	Other existing walked route	No	No	Pavement edge		
TSE 5e	TSE-5-S027*	Other existing walked route	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
TSE 5e	TSE-5-S028*	Other existing walked route	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
TSE 5e	TSE-5-S029*	Other existing walked route	No	No	Pavement edge	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
TSE 5e	TSE-5-S030*	Other existing walked route	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
TSE 5e	TSE-5-S031*	Other existing walked route	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
TSE 5e	TSE-5-S032*	Other existing walked route	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
TSE 5e	TSE-5-S033*	Other existing walked route	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
TSE 5e	TSE-5-S034FW*	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
TSE 5e	TSE-5-S035FW*	Public footway (pavement)	No	No	Pavement edge	Clarity and cohesion	
TSE 5e	TSE-5-S036RD*	Public highway	No	No			
TSE 5e	TSE-5-S037FP*	Public footpath	No	No			
TSE 5f	TSE-5-S038FP	Public footpath	No	No			
TSE 5f	TSE-5-S039FP	Public footpath	No	No			
TSE 5f	TSE-5-S040FP	Public footpath	No	No			
TSE 5g	TSE-5-S041	Other existing walked route	No	No			
TSE 5g	TSE-5-S042	Other existing walked route	No	No			
TSE 5h	TSE-5-S043	Other existing walked route	No	No			
TSE 5i	TSE-5-S043 (continued)	Other existing walked route	No	No			
TSE 5j	TSE-5-S043 (continued)	Other existing walked route	No	No			
TSE 5k	TSE-5-S044 RD	Public highway	No	No			
TSE 5k	TSE-5-S045	Other existing walked route	No	No			
TSE 5k	TSE-5-S046	Other existing walked route	No	No			

5.3.2 Other options considered: Maps TSE 5d to TSE 5f: Ferry Road Benfleet to Barge Pier, Shoeburyness

Map(s)	Route section numbers(s)	Other option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
TSE 5d	TSE-5-S006 to TSE-5-S022	We considered minor variations to the proposed route around Two Tree Island. We also considered not looping around Two Tree Island and keeping the Trail on the mainland	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ it is closer to the sea and maintains views of the sea ■ it worked with the current land uses and promoted routes around the island and avoided the most sensitive wildlife areas ■ Two Tree Island is generally publically accessible at present and has good non-tidal access on to it. It is of sufficient size to consider creating a loop around the perimeter ■ 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
TSE 5e	TSE-5-S026 to TSE-5-S037	We considered various options relating to the network of alleyways in the old town of Leigh.	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ it is closer to the sea and maintains views of the sea ■ it considers the current land uses and traffic in the area and reduces potential conflicts between walkers and vehicles where possible. ■ 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 5.4: Maps

5.4.1 Map Index

Map reference	Map title
TSE 5a	Ferry Road, Benfleet to Car Park at end of Benfleet Marshes
TSE 5b	Car Park at end of Benfleet Marshes to Hadleigh Ray
TSE 5c	Hadleigh Ray to South East of Hadleigh Marsh
TSE 5d	South East of Hadleigh Marsh to Leigh Marshes Car Park
TSE 5e	Leigh Marshes Car Park to Leigh Cliffs
TSE 5f	Leigh Cliffs to Chalkwell Esplanade
TSE 5g	Chalkwell Esplanade to Westcliffe Leisure Centre
TSE 5h	Westcliffe Leisure Centre to Eastern Esplanade
TSE 5i	Eastern Esplanade to Thorpe Esplanade
TSE 5j	Thorpe Esplanade to Shoebury Common Road
TSE 5k	Shoebury Common Road to Barge Pier, Shoeburyness
Directions Map TSE E5a and E5b	Proposed direction under S25A CROW

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

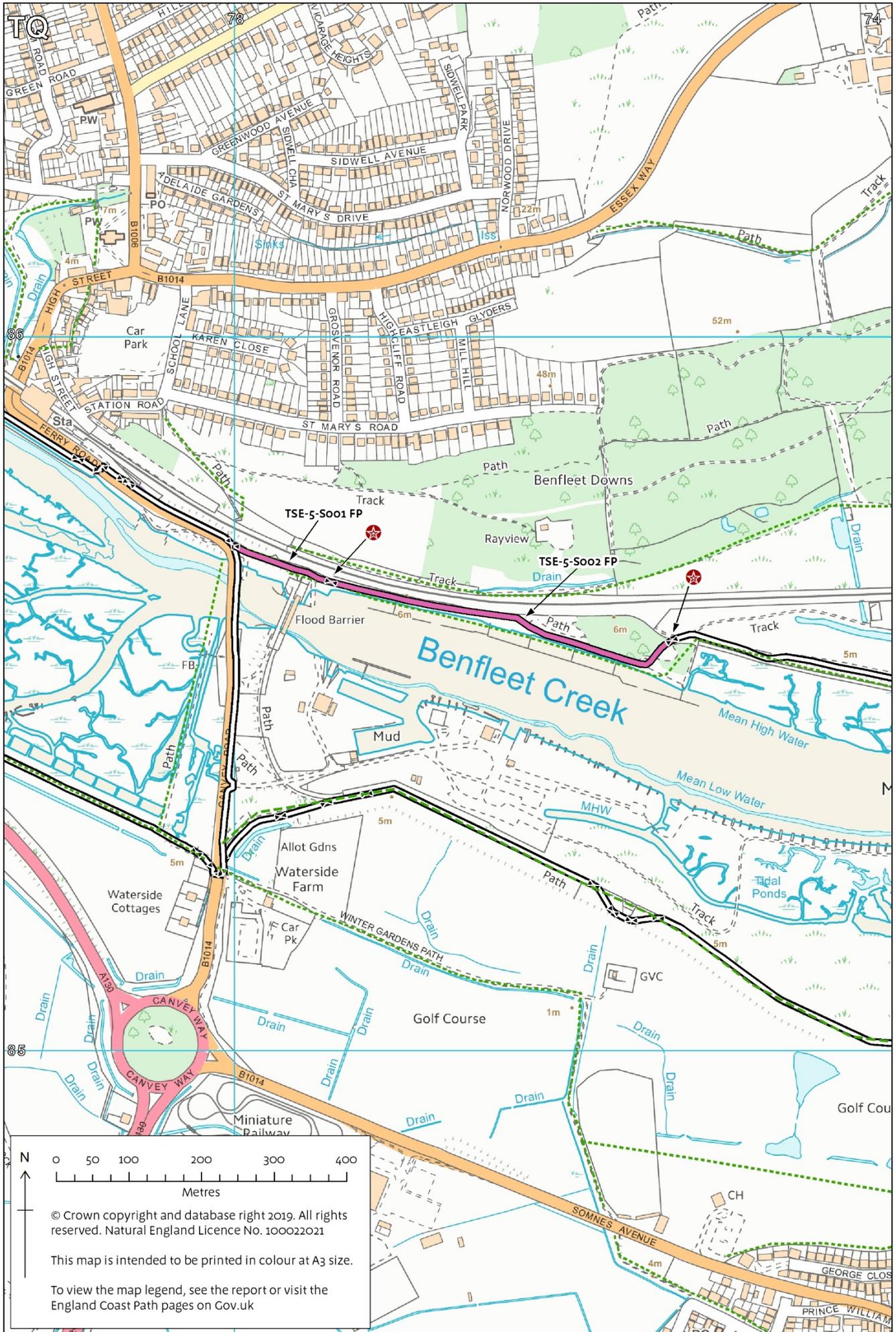
Each symbol shown on the map is colour coded as appropriate, as in this example for a set of steps:

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

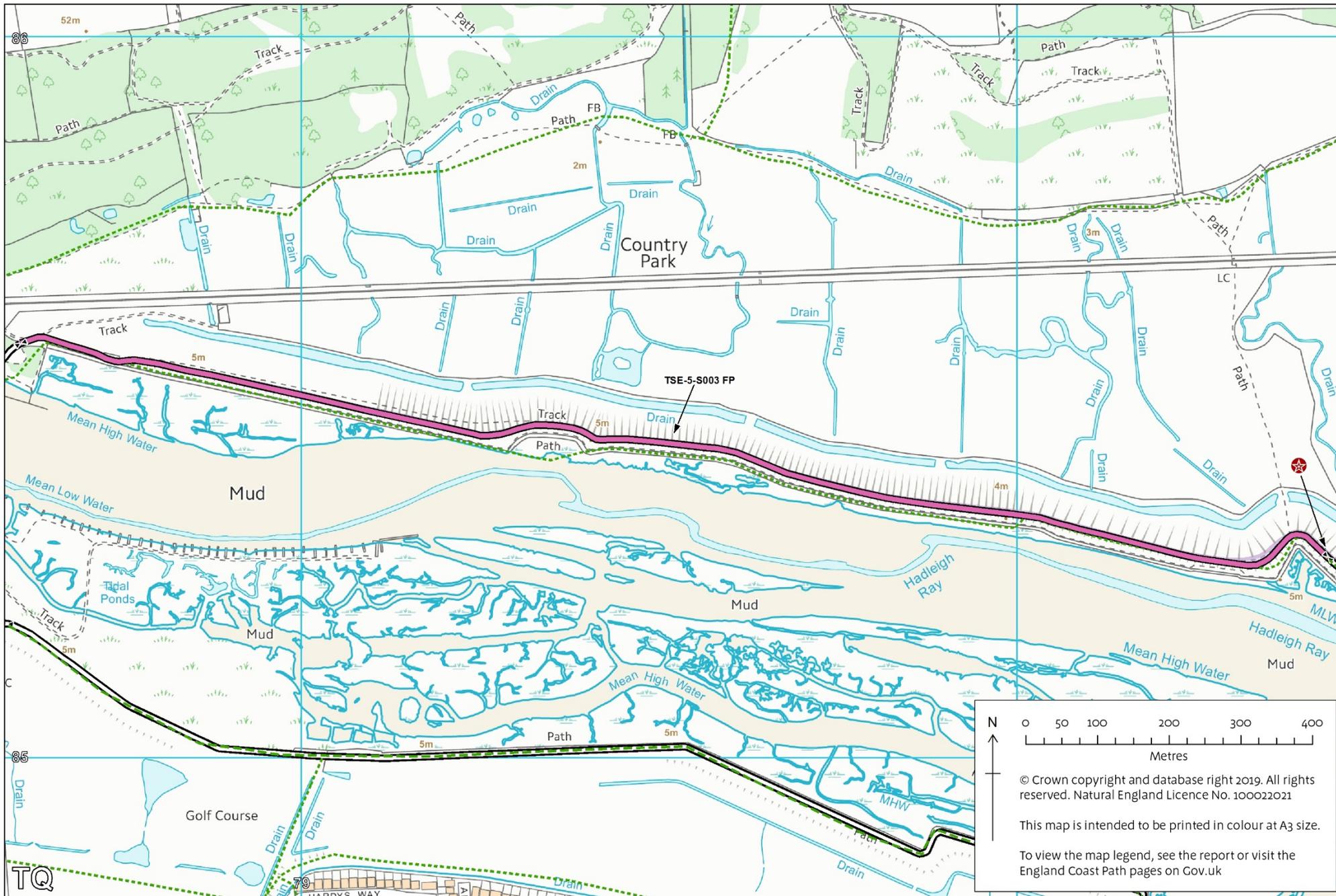
* Please note that the items in this legend may not all be present on an individual map or report.

Map TSE 5a - Ferry Road, Benfleet to Car Park at end of Benfleet Marshes

Map TSE 5a - Ferry Road, Benfleet to Car Park at end of Benfleet Marshes



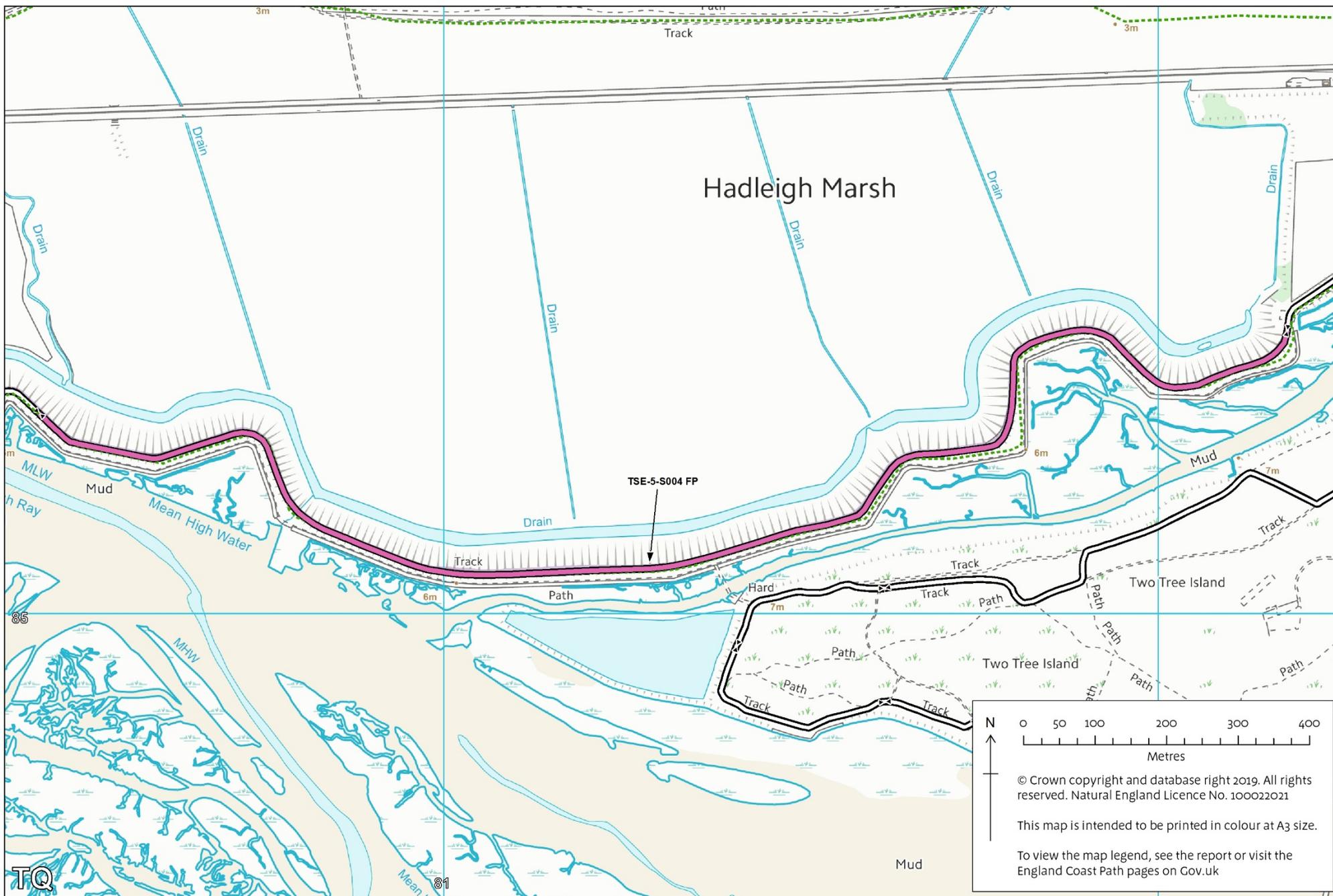
Map TSE 5b - Car Park at end of Benfleet Marshes to Hadleigh Ray



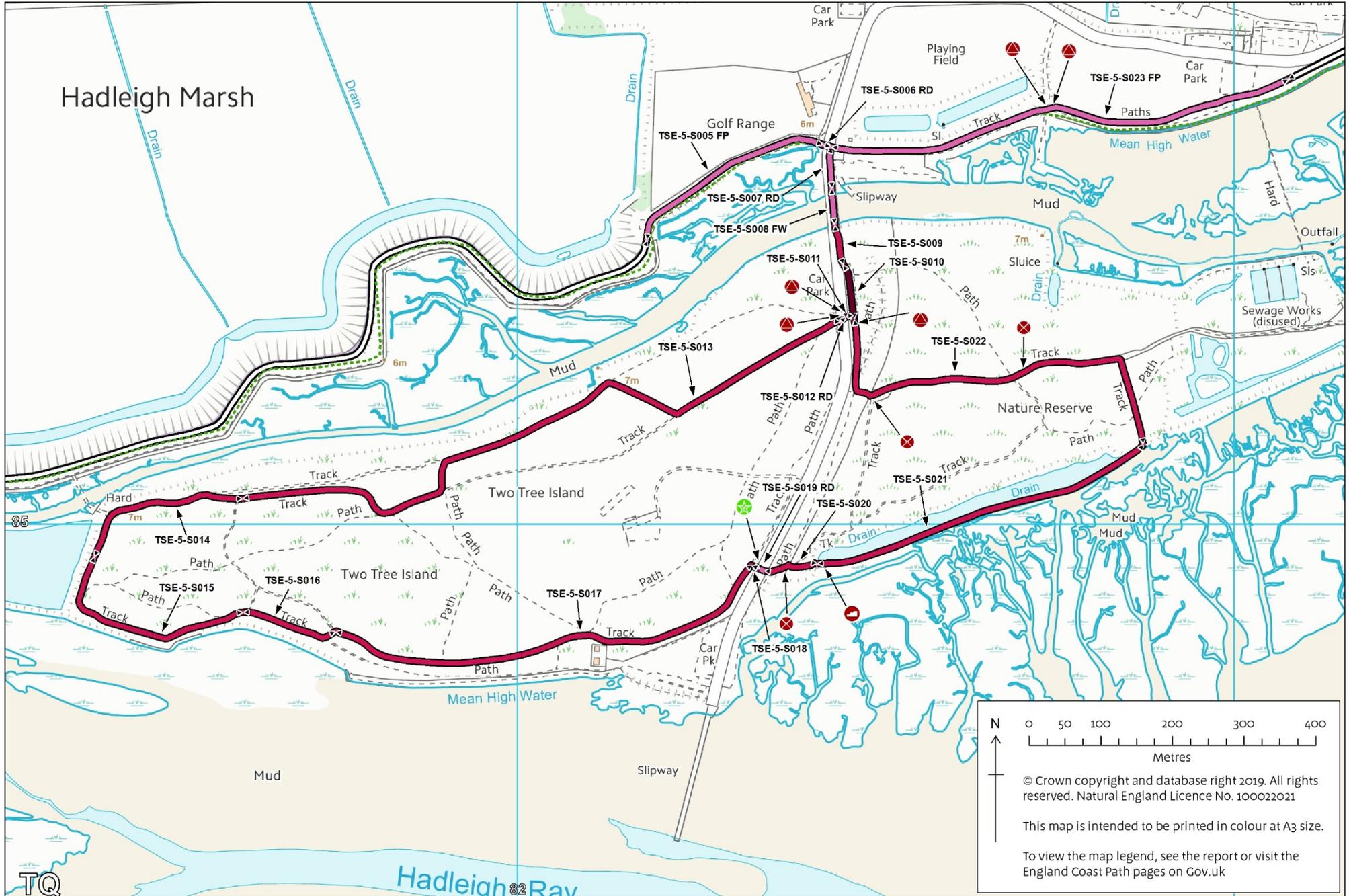
Map TSE 5b - Car Park at end of Benfleet Marshes to Hadleigh Ray

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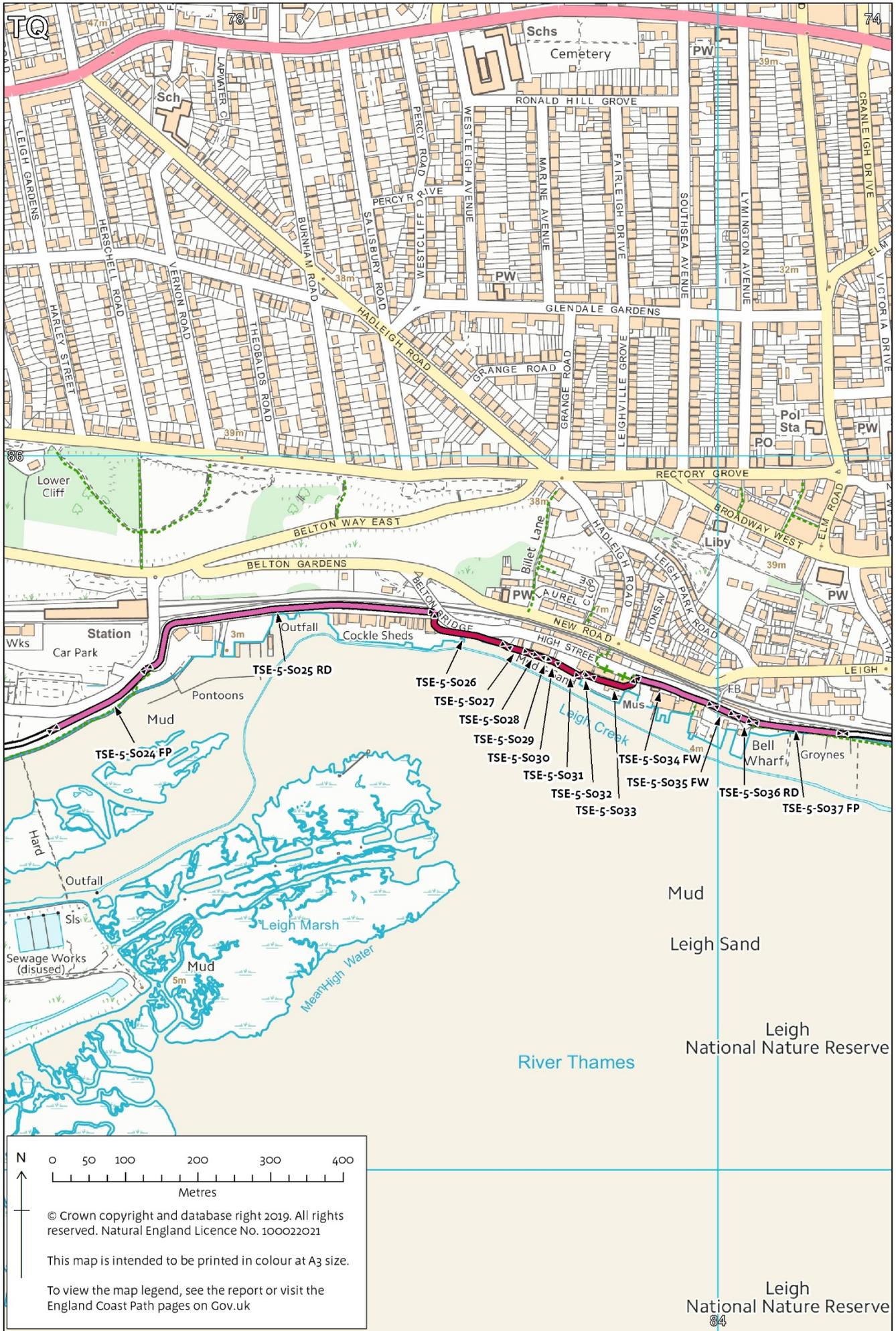
Map TSE 5c - Hadleigh Ray to South East of Hadleigh Marsh

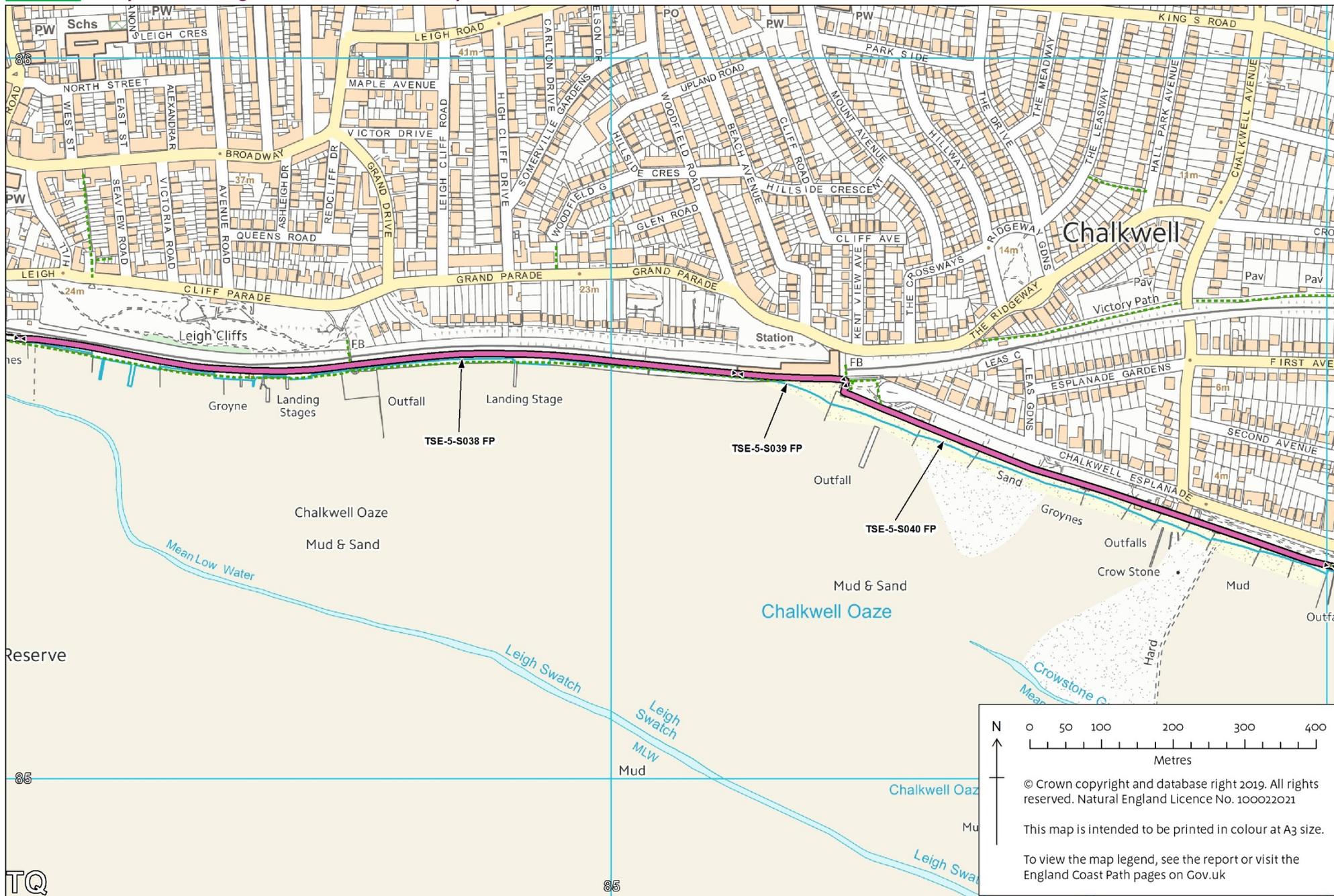


Map TSE 5d - South East of Hadleigh Marsh to Leigh Marshes Car Park



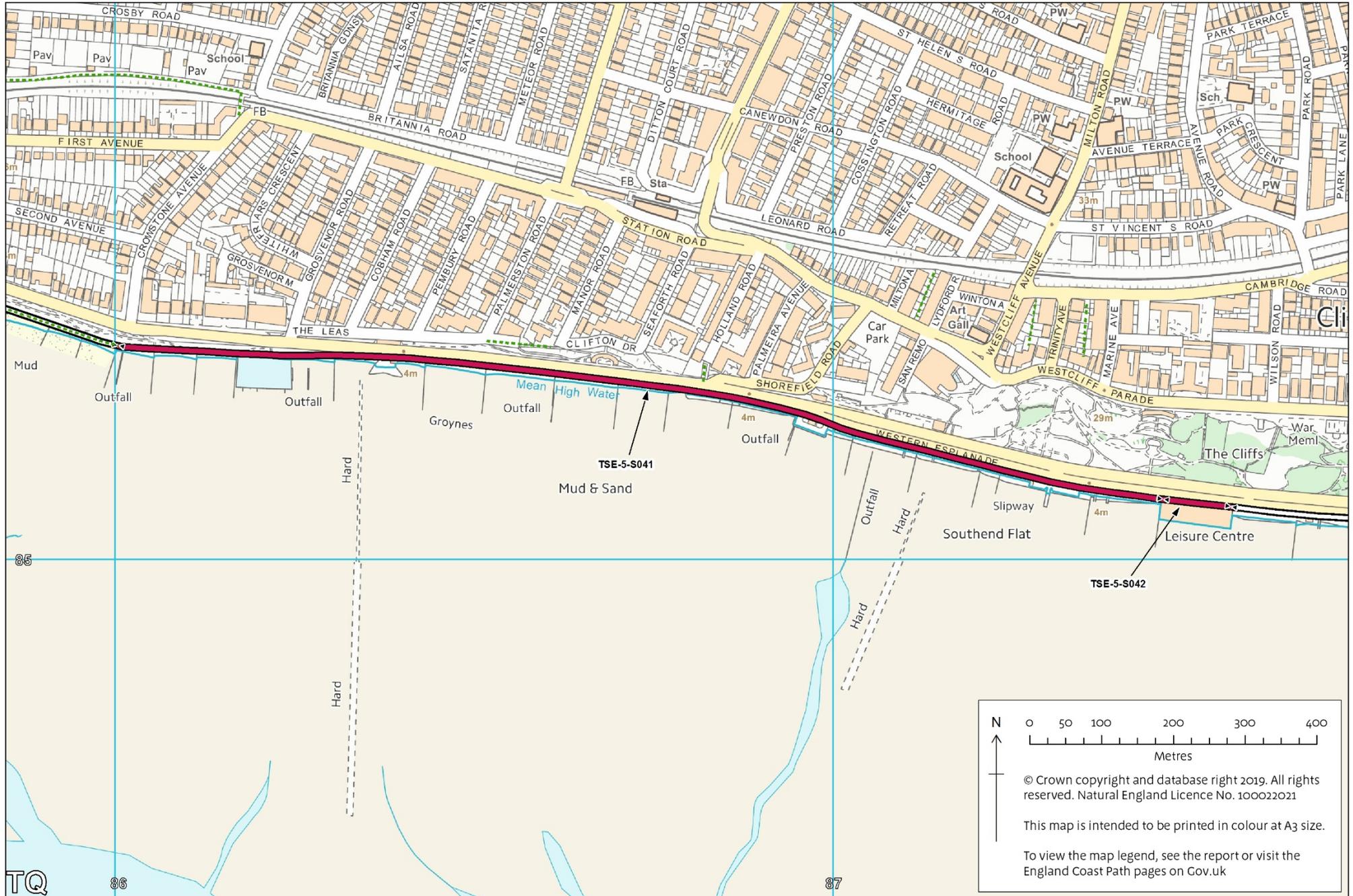
Map TSE 5d - South East of Hadleigh Marsh to Leigh Marshes Car Park





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Map TSE 5g - Chalkwell Esplanade to Westcliffe Leisure Centre



Map TSE 5h - Westcliffe Leisure Centre to Eastern Esplanade



Map TSE 5h - Westcliffe Leisure Centre to Eastern Esplanade

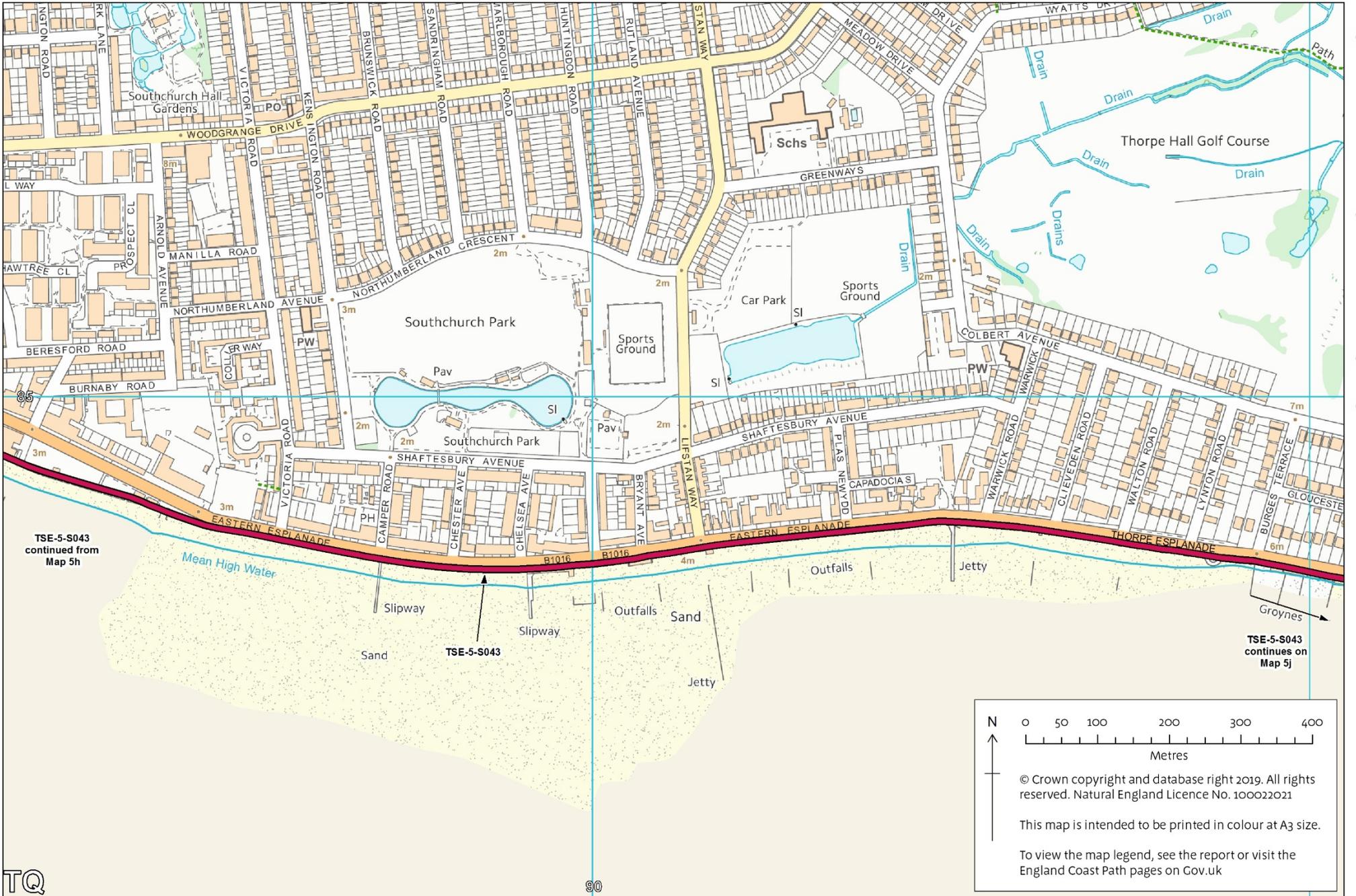
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TSE-5-S043 continued from Map 5h

TSE-5-S043

TSE-5-S043 continues on Map 5j

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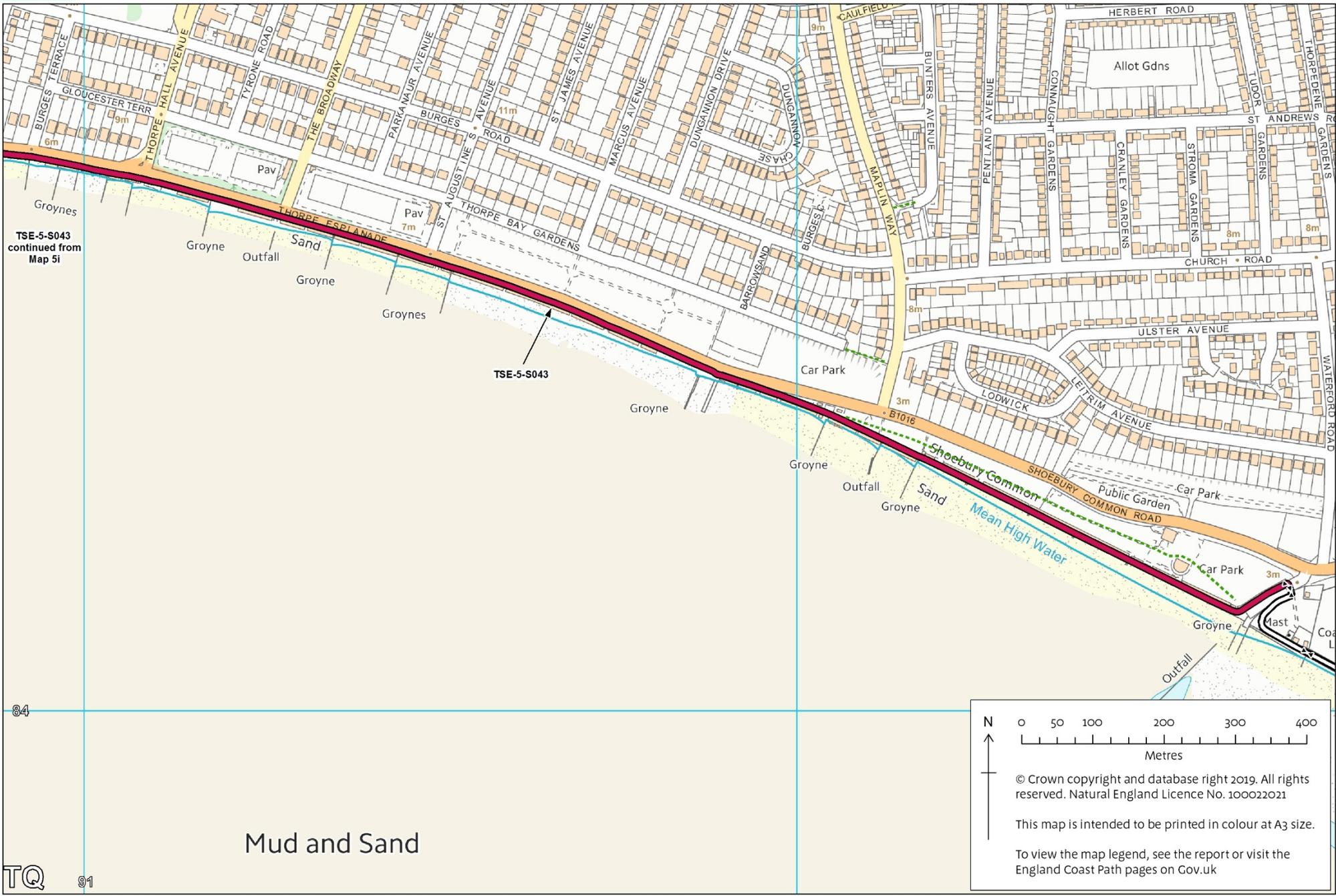
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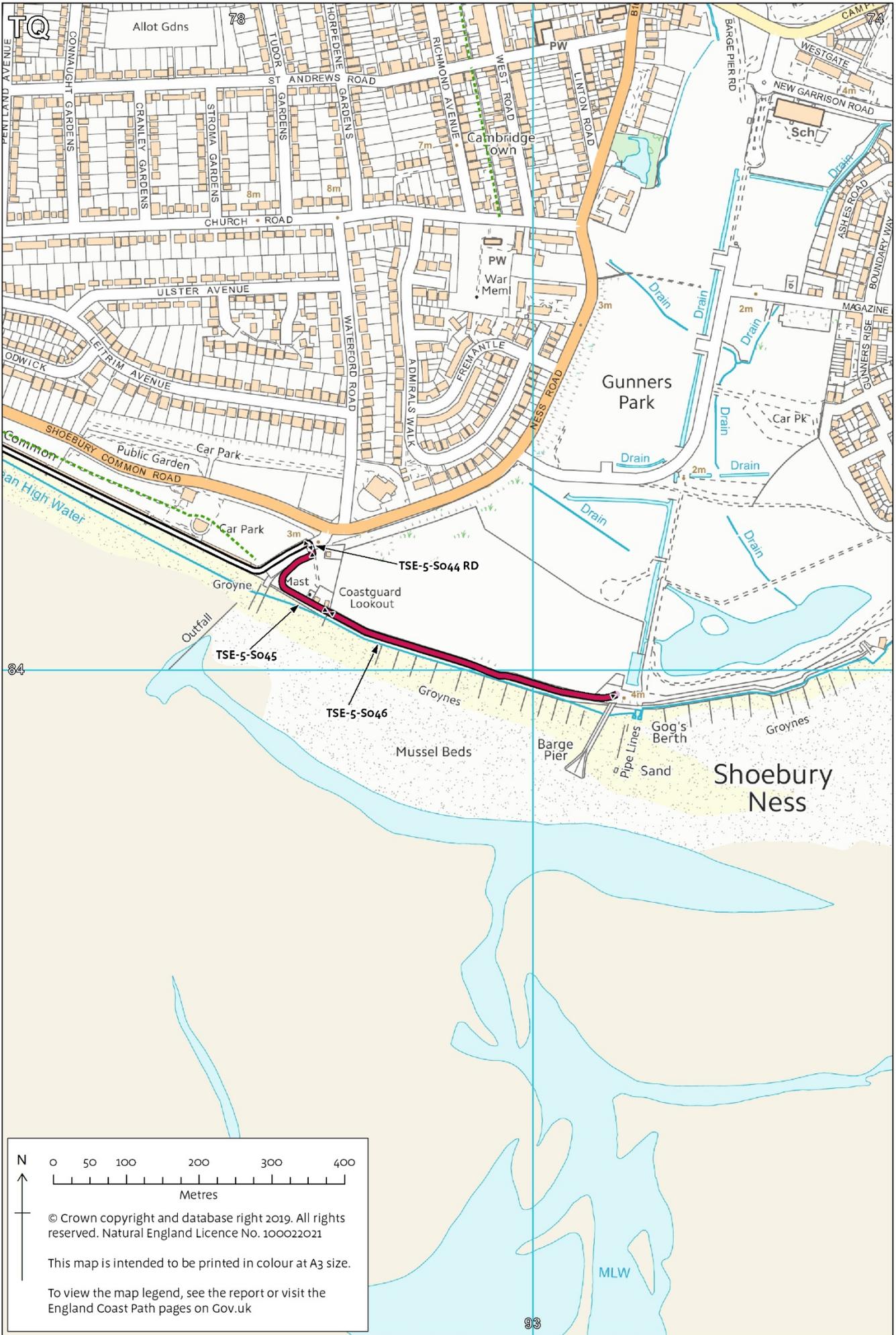
To view the map legend, see the report or visit the England Coast Path pages on Gov.uk

Map TSE 5j - Thorpe Esplanade to Shoebury Common Road

Map TSE 5j - Thorpe Esplanade to Shoebury Common Road



Mud and Sand



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0 50 100 200 300 400

Metres

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