

England Coast Path Stretch: Hunstanton to Sutton Bridge

Report HSB 2: Beach Road, Shepherd's Port to South Outmarsh, King's Lynn

Part 2.1: Introduction

Start Point:	Beach Road, Shepherd's Port (Grid reference TF6471 3350)
End Point:	South Outmarsh, King's Lynn (Grid reference TF6069 2391)
Relevant Maps:	HSB 2a to HSB 2g

2.1.1 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 Hunstanton and Sutton Bridge.

2.1.2 This report covers length HSB 2 of the stretch, which is the coast between Beach Road, Shepherd's Port and South Outmarsh, King's Lynn. 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.

2.1.3 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.

2.1.4 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 2.2: Proposals Narrative

The trail:

2.2.1 Initially follows existing walked routes, including public rights of way and through the RSPB reserve.

2.2.2 Mainly follows the coastline quite closely but for nature conservation reasons there are extensive lengths where the route is landward of the seabank.

2.2.3 Includes one section of new path, between Wolferton and South Outmarsh. See maps 2c to 2g 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.

2.2.4 The following designated sites affect this length of coast:

- The Wash and North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- The Wash Special Protection Area (SPA)
- The Wash National Nature Reserve (NNR)
- The Wash Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- The Wash Ramsar wetland
- Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Maps C1 and C2 in the Overview shows the extent of designated areas listed

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

2.2.5 Measures to protect the environment

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Design features of the access proposals	Reason included
HSB 2a to 2g	HSB-2-S001 to HSB-2-S061	<p>The following design features are described elsewhere in this report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Information boards will be installed at appropriate points along the route to inform visitors of the biodiversity interest of The Wash and the sensitivity of habitats and species to disturbance.	Repeated disturbance to foraging or resting birds during winter and / or on passage which may lead to reduced fitness and reduction in population and / or contraction in the distribution of qualifying features within the site.

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Design features of the access proposals	Reason included
HSB 2b	HSB-2-S053	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short sections of fence or posts will be erected at the junction of the England Coast Path with the three informal paths running south towards the shingle ridges at the southern end of the RSPB reserve. 	To reduce the trampling of vegetated shingle in areas where unofficial paths have developed and may get increased use in an area that currently has no onward access.
HSB 2c – HSB 2g	HSB-2-S055 to HSB-2-S061	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new stretch of path between Wolferton and South Outmarsh will be mostly landward of the seawall to separate walkers from water bird roosting and feeding areas on the adjacent saltmarsh. 	To reduce disturbance of foraging or resting birds during winter and / or on passage.

2.2.6 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 Norfolk County Council’s Historic Environment team 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:

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

- The trail would follow an uneven grass or bare soil path along the top of banks;
- it would be necessary to ascend/descend the bank by a set of steps and an earth slope.

Walkers using the trail to the east will have become used to villages every few miles but in this section the distance between Shepherd’s Port and King’s Lynn is 18km and so walkers are remote from local facilities and support.

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

Where we have proposed exercising statutory discretions:

2.2.8 Estuary: This report proposes that the trail should include a route around the Inner Wash Estuary Complex, extending upstream from the open coast. Natural England proposes to exercise its functions as if the sea included the estuarial waters of the estuary complex as far as the first crossing points on the Great Ouse and River Nene, as indicated by the extent of the trail detailed in reports HSB 3 and HSB 4. This trail in this report is aligned along part of the estuary system, including a short section of the Great Ouse.

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

2.2.9 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, path or track to make the extent of the new access rights clearer. See Table 2.3.1 below.

2.2.10 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 2.3.1. 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 2.3.1] 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.

2.2.11 Restrictions and/or exclusions: We have proposed to exclude and/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/flat from Snettisham Beach to South Outmarsh

2.2.12 Access to the saltmarsh and flats in the coastal margin seaward of route sections HSB-2-S001 to HSB-2-S062 is to be excluded all year-round by direction under S25A of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) because we are satisfied that 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. Between HSB-2-S001 and HSB-2-S048 the mudflat is at a distance from the coast (as shown in Map HSB E2: Directions to exclude/restrict access).

2.2.13 The Section 25A exclusion is proposed between Beach Road Shepherd's Port and South Outmarsh King's Lynn, where it is considered that saltmarsh and flats are unsuitable for public access, notwithstanding any locally tolerated access. Safety is considered as part of the assessment along with the nature of the terrain and any natural risks that exist such as soft mud, hidden channels, potential to be trapped by rising tides, and suitability for walking. The intention is to prevent those who may be unfamiliar with the risks from using such areas.

- The saltmarsh around the Wash is subject to regular tidal inundation, generally uneven and wet underfoot, and incised with creeks and channels, some of which would not be readily apparent to walkers; and
- The areas of flat on the Wash are predominantly soft mud at low tide that is difficult to walk on, which becomes inundated when the tide rises.

2.2.14 These directions will not prevent or affect:

- any use of the land by existing right; such use is not covered by coastal access rights;
- use of any registered rights of common or of any individual or local rights that operate at common law or by Royal Charter etc.; or
- any use that people already make of the land with the express permission of the landowner, or where such permission is implied by existing signage, site management arrangements etc.

Any such use that already takes place locally is not prohibited or limited by these arrangements - though it remains open to the landowner, as now, to vary any existing permissions.

Where there is a clear and significant pattern of traditional use of an area of land or a coastal route by local people or the wider public for open-air recreation, without any recognised legal right or express or implied permission for them to do so, we have scrutinised particularly carefully any suggestion that such use should be ended or limited under the new arrangements. CROW exclusions of or restrictions on such use are imposed only as a last resort, if the need is pressing and there is clear evidence that the situation cannot be sufficiently improved through improved access management measures on the ground. See section 6.5 of the Coastal Access Scheme for more information on such management measures.

2.2.15 This direction is 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.

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

2.2.16 **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.

2.2.17 Column 4 of tables 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 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 HSB 2a to HSB 2b as the proposed route of the trail.

2.2.18 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 tables 2.3.1 or 2.3.2, the route is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps HSB 2c to HSB 2g as the proposed route of the trail.

Other future change:

2.2.19 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:

2.2.20 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.

The coast path covered by this report would be proposed on 11km of new path.

2.2.21 Our estimate of the capital costs for physical establishment of the trail on the proposed route is £39,000 and is informed by:

- information already held by the access authority, Norfolk County Council, in relation to the management of the existing Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path National Trail and England Coast Path in other parts of the county;
- 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.

2.2.22 There are five main elements to the overall cost:

- A number of new items of waymark and information signage would be needed on the trail
- Gates
- Work to re-profile a bank to create access
- Steps
- Platforms to give views over the seabank.

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
Gates	6,000
Signs and information signs	3,000
Steps	5,000
Reprofiling work	20,000
Viewing platforms	6,000
Project management	6,000

Total **46,000 (Exclusive of any VAT payable)**

6 England Coast Path | Hunstanton to Sutton Bridge | HSB 2: Beach Road, Shepherd's Port to South Outmarsh, King's Lynn

2.2.23 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, Norfolk 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:

2.2.24 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).

2.2.25 We estimate that the annual cost to maintain the trail will be £6,547.68 (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 2.3: Proposals Tables

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

2.3.1 Section Details: Maps HSB 2a to HSB 2g - Beach Road, Shepherd's Port and South Outmarsh, King's Lynn

Key notes on table:

1. Column 2 – an asterisk (*) against the route section number means see also table 2.3.2: Other options considered.
2. Column 4 – 'No' means no roll-back is proposed for this route section.
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
HSB 2a	HSB-2-S001 FP to HSB-2-S010 FP	Public footpath	Yes – see table 2.3.3	No	Landward edge of path	Clarity and cohesion	
HSB 2a	HSB-2-S011 FP to HSB-2-S047 FP	Public footpath	Yes – see table 2.3.3	Yes - bank	Landward edge of path	Clarity and cohesion	
HSB 2b	HSB-2-S048 FP	Public footpath	Yes – see table 2.3.3	Yes - bank			
HSB 2b	HSB-2-S049 FP	Public footpath	Yes – see table 2.3.3	No	Landward edge of path	Clarity and cohesion	
HSB 2b	HSB-2-S050	Other existing walked route	Yes – see table 2.3.3	No	Landward edge of path	Clarity and cohesion	
HSB 2b	HSB-2-S051	Other existing walked route	Yes – see table 2.3.3	No	Fence	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
HSB 2b	HSB-2-S052	Other existing walked route	Yes – see table 2.3.3	No			
HSB 2c	HSB-2-S053 to HSB-2-S054	Other existing walked route	Yes – see table 2.3.3	No	Fence	Clarity and cohesion	
HSB 2c	HSB-2-S055*	Not an existing walked route	No	No	Various	Clarity and cohesion	Various means ditch, fence, landward edge of track. Landward of the bank
HSB 2c	HSB-2-S056*	Not an existing walked route	No	No	Landward edge of track	Clarity and cohesion	Landward of the bank
HSB 2c	HSB-2-S057*	Not an existing walked route	No	No	Ditch	Clarity and cohesion	Landward of the bank
HSB 2c	HSB-2-S058*	Not an existing walked route	No	No	Ditch	Clarity and cohesion	Landward of the bank
HSB 2d	HSB-2-S058* cont'd	Not an existing walked route	No	No	Ditch	Clarity and cohesion	Landward of the bank
HSB 2d	HSB-2-S059*	Not an existing walked route	No	No	Fence	Clarity and cohesion	Landward of the bank
HSB 2e	HSB-2-S059* cont'd	Not an existing walked route	No	No	Fence	Clarity and cohesion	Landward of the bank
HSB 2f	HSB-2-S060	Not an existing	No	Yes - bank			

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					
HSB 2f	HSB-2-S061*	Not an existing walked route	No	No	Fence	Clarity and cohesion	Landward of the bank
HSB 2g	HSB-2-S061* cont'd	Not an existing walked route	No	No	Fence	Clarity and cohesion	Landward of the bank
HSB 2g	HSB-2-S062	Not an existing walked route	No	No			

2.3.2 Other options considered: Maps HSB 2a to HSB 2g - Beach Road, Shepherd's Port and South Outmarsh, King's Lynn

Maps	Route section numbers	Other option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
			We opted for the proposed route because:
HSB 2b and 2c	HSB-2-S053 to HSB-2-S057	We considered aligning seaward of the bank at Wolferton Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ It did not provide an alignment that could be sustained over the long term. ■ this area of The Wash is highly designated (see Overview maps C1 and C2) and accordingly has been subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment. The outcome of this concluded likely significant effect on birds due to repeated disturbance.
HSB 2c to HSB 2g	HSB-2-S055 to HSB-2-059 and HSB-2-S061	We considered aligning along the top of the bank between The Ingol (map 2c) and South Outmarsh (map 2g)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ this area of The Wash is highly designated (see Overview maps C1 and C2) and accordingly has been subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment. The outcome of this concluded likely significant effect on birds due to repeated disturbance.

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.

2.3.3 Roll-back implementation – more complex situations: Maps HSB 2a to HSB 2b – Shepherd’s Port to The Ingol

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Feature(s) or site(s) potentially affected	Our likely approach to roll-back
HSB 2a to HSB 2b	HSB-1-S001 to S054	Areas of low-lying land	<p>The trail will be adjusted to follow a new route if the existing one is no longer viable as a walking route. Areas landward of the current route that may be unaffected by potential direct roll-back may need to change to create a linked route to parts of the trail that have rolled-back.</p> <p>In reaching this judgement we will have full regard to the need to seek a fair balance between the interests of potentially affected owners and occupiers and those of the public.</p>

Part 2.4: Proposals Maps

2.4.1 Map Index

Map reference	Map title
HSB 2a	Beach Road Shepherd’s Port to Wolferton Creek
HSB 2b	Wolferton Creek to The Ingol
HSB 2c	The Ingol to South Outmarsh (Section 1)
HSB 2d	The Ingol to South Outmarsh (Section 2)
HSB 2e	The Ingol to South Outmarsh (Section 3)
HSB 2f	The Ingol to South Outmarsh (Section 4)
HSB 2g	The Ingol to South Outmarsh (Section 5)
HSB E2	Map HSB E2: Directions to exclude/restrict access - as proposed for area covered by Report HSB2

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

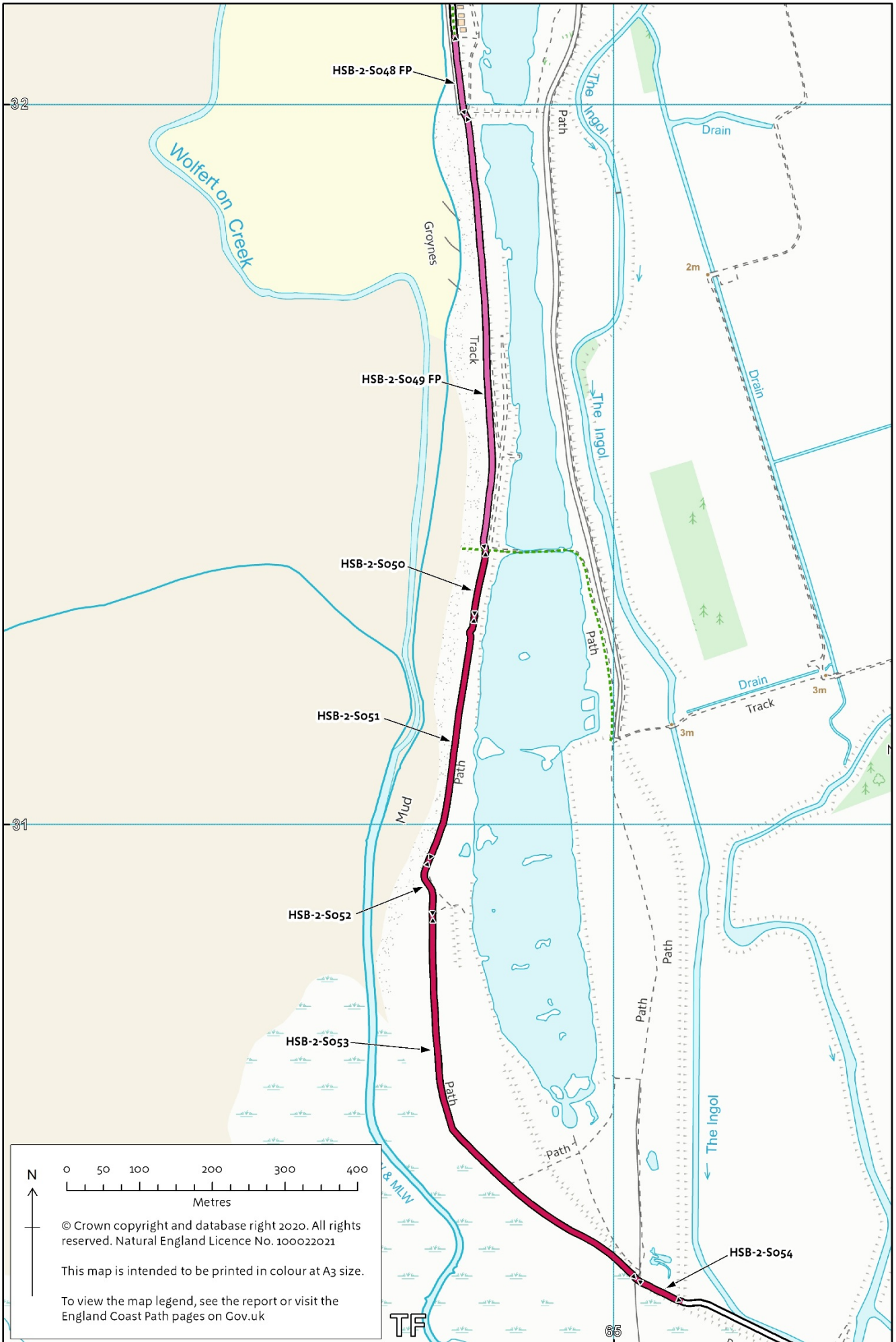
Infrastructure status

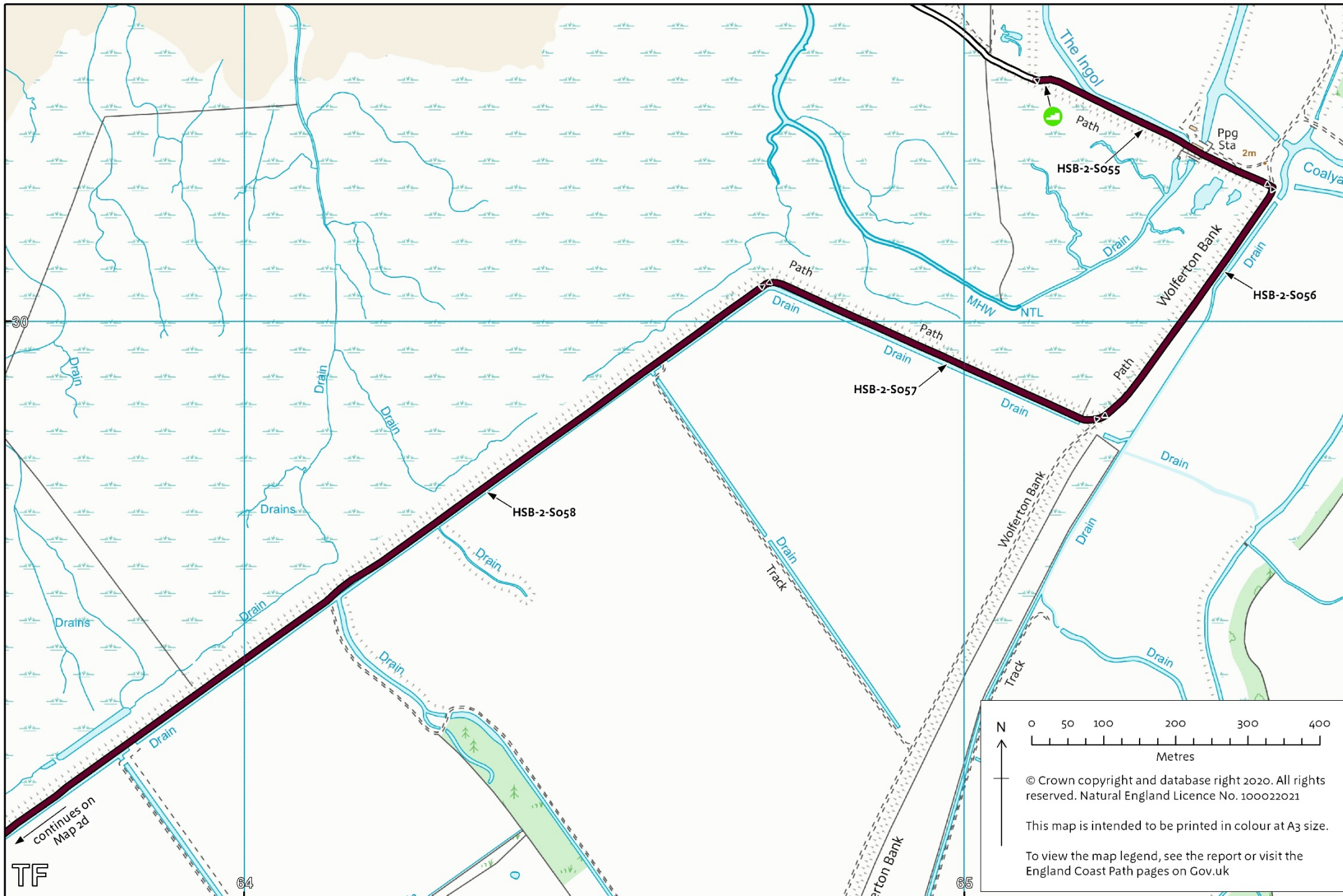
Each symbol shown on the map is colour coded as appropriate, as in this example for a set of steps:

- 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.

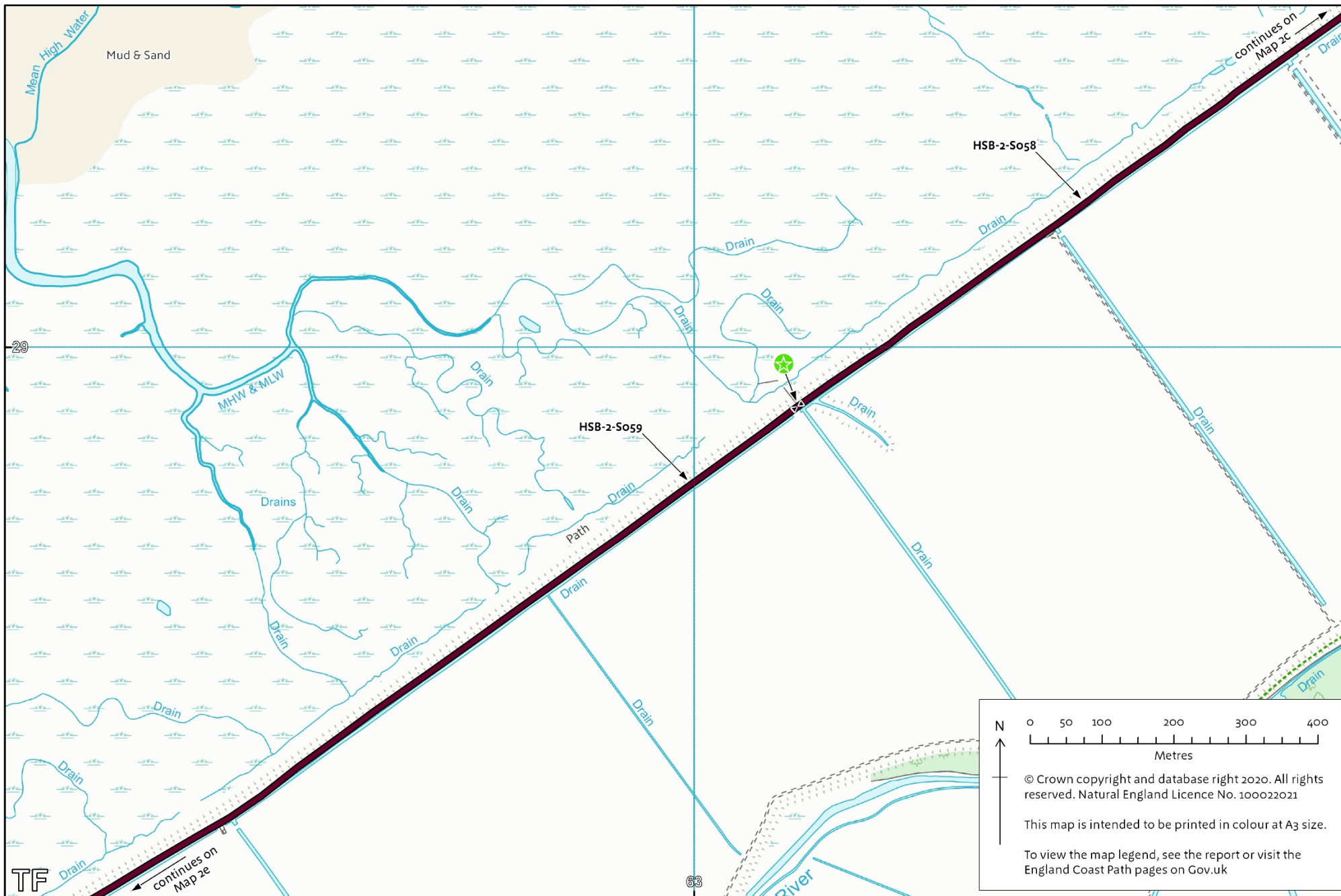




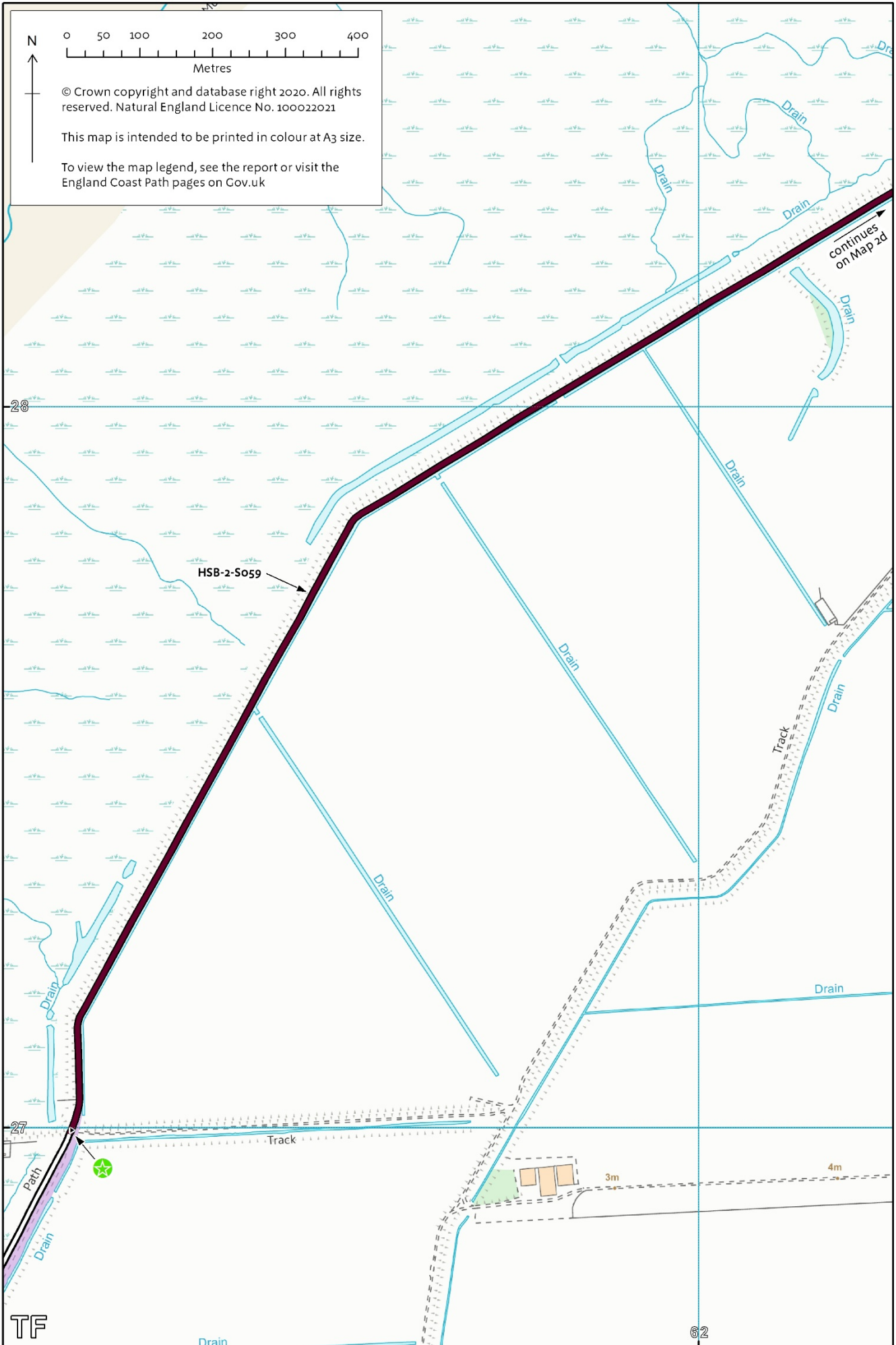


Map HSB 2c - The Ingol to South Outmarsh (Section 1)

Map HSB 2d - The Ingol to South Outmarsh (Section 2)

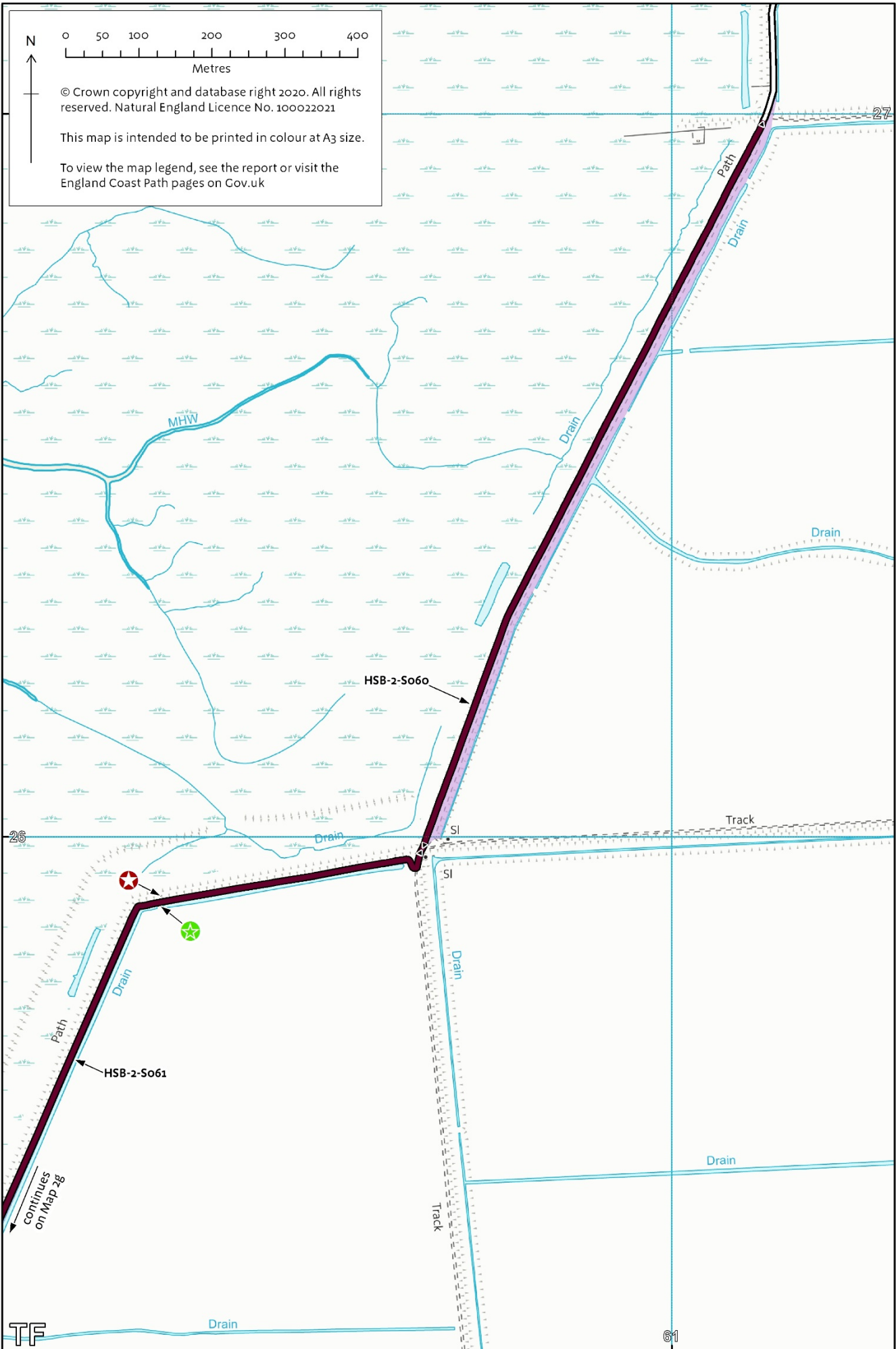


Map HSB 2d - The Ingol to South Outmarsh (Section 2)

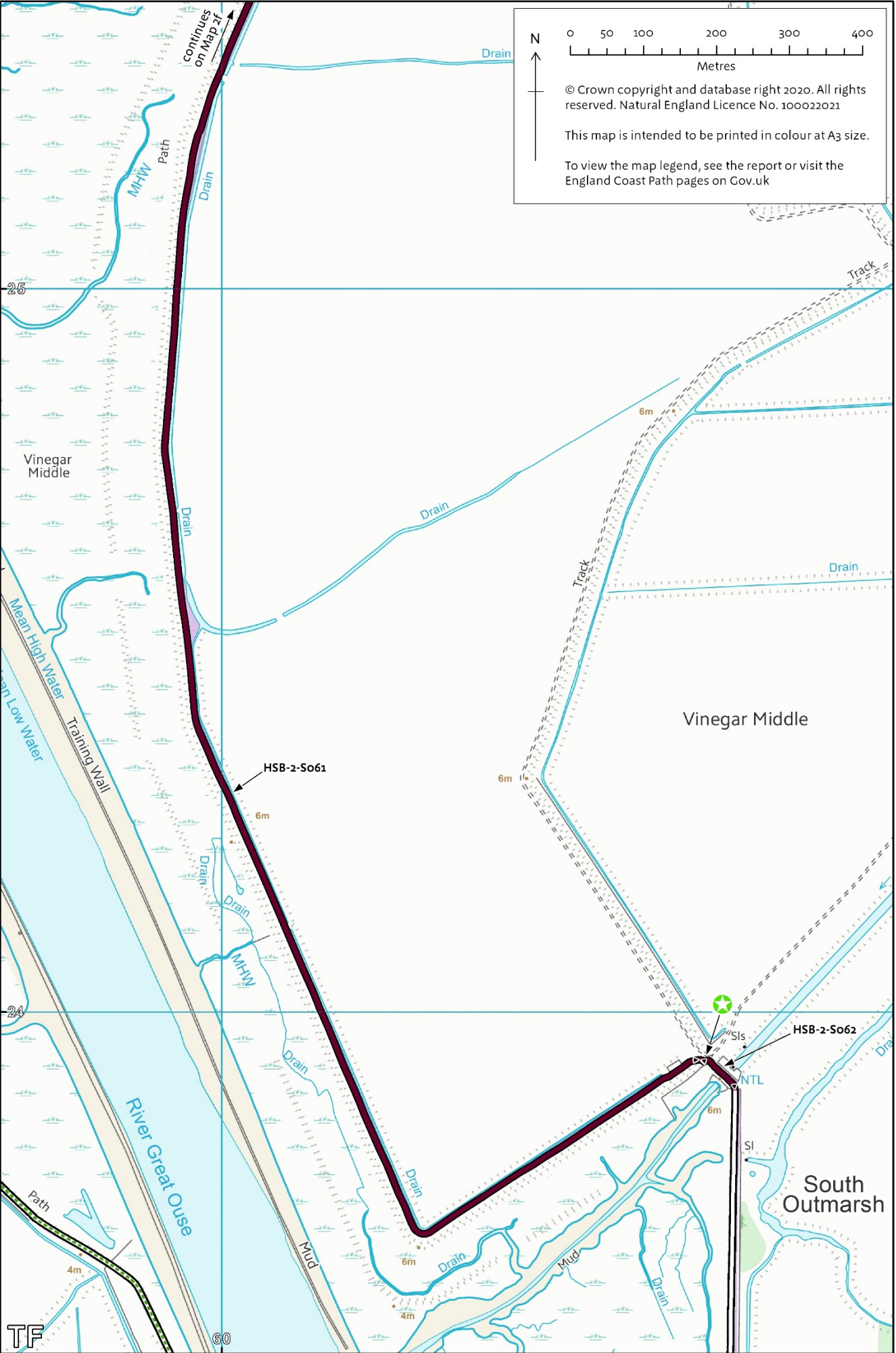


TF

62



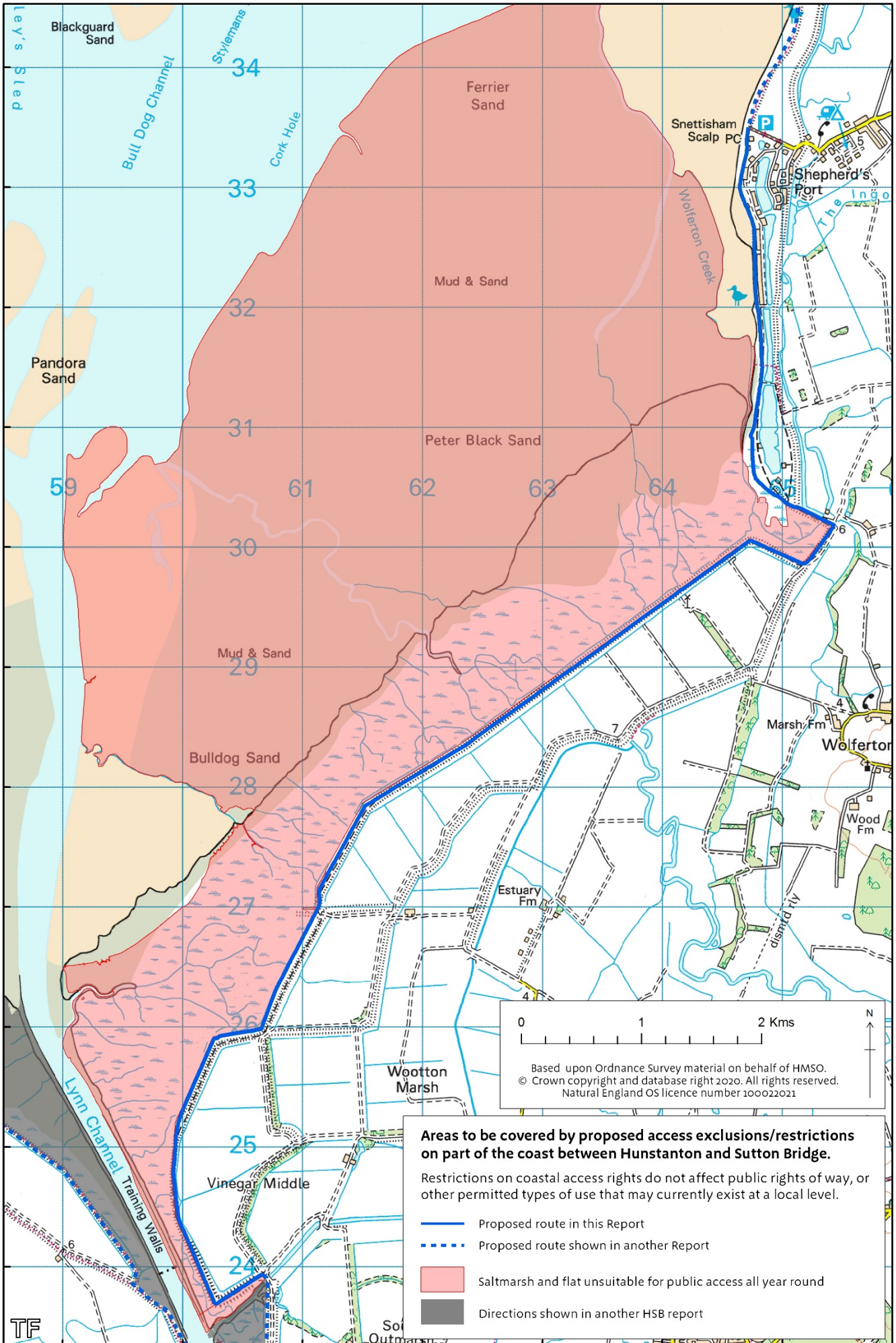
Map HSB 2f - The Ingol to South Outmarsh (Section 4)



Map HSB E2:

Directions to exclude/restrict access - as proposed for area covered by Report HSB2

Map HSB E2: Directions to exclude/restrict access - as proposed for area covered by Report HSB2



TF