



England Coast Path Stretch: Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey

Report FFB 6: Ramsholt to Bawdsey Quay

Part 6.1: Introduction

Start Point:	Ramsholt (grid reference: TM3088 4141)
End Point:	Bawdsey Quay (grid reference: TM3312 3788)
Relevant Maps:	FFB 6a to FFB 6c

6.1.1 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 Felixstowe Ferry and Bawdsey.

6.1.2 This report covers length FFB 6 of the stretch, which is the coast between Ramsholt and Bawdsey 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.

6.1.3 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.

6.1.4 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 6.2: Proposals Narrative

The trail:

6.2.1 Includes nine sections of new path between Ramsholt and Ferry Road Bawdsey (maps FFB 6a to FFB 6c, sections FFB-6-S001 to FFB-6-S009).

6.2.2 Follows the shoreline quite closely and maintains good views of the estuary.

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.

6.2.3 The following designated sites affect this length of coast:

- Deben Estuary SPA
- Deben Estuary SSSI
- Deben Estuary RAMSAR

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

6.2.4 Measures to protect the environment

Maps	Route section numbers	Design features of the access proposals	Reasons included
FFB 6a – FFB 6c	FFB-6-S001 to FFB-6-S009	<p>The following design features are described elsewhere in this report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The trail between a point approximately 420m south of Dock Road, Ramsholt and Ferry Road, Bawdsey is to be aligned along the folding (sections FFB-6-S003 to FFB-6-S008). ■ Access to the sea wall adjacent to the trail in the coastal margin will be excluded between Ramsholt and Bawdsey all year round, next to route sections FFB-6-S003 to FFB-6-S008. See map FFB E6 below and in the Overview, the Habitat Regulations Assessment 	<p>To prevent disturbance to breeding and roosting birds such as redshank, oystercatcher, ringed plover, lapwing and avocet on the seawall and adjacent saltmarsh and intertidal area (see section 6.2.11 below).</p> <p>To prevent ‘skylining’ by walkers on the seawall. This is to avoid disturbance to breeding and roosting birds such as redshank, oystercatcher, ringed plover, lapwing and avocet on the sea wall and estuary side of the trail.</p>

Maps	Route section numbers	Design features of the access proposals	Reasons included
		<p>and the Nature Conservation Assessment accompanying this report for further detail.</p> <p>In addition, we will install:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A stock proof fence on the folding between the trail and the flood defence wall (sections FFB-6-S003 to FFB-6-S008) as a physical barrier to people and dogs. This fence will be installed 3 metres seaward from the borrowdyke edge. ■ Gates to prevent dogs accessing the arable fields landward of the trail across bridges or culverts on the borrowdyke. ■ Information signs at the Ramsholt and Bawdsey access points informing people of the sensitivity of the landward side of the trail and the importance of keeping dogs under close control. 	<p>To prevent disturbance to breeding and roosting birds such as redshank, oystercatcher, ringed plover, lapwing and avocet on the flood defence wall and estuary side of the trail by recreational users and their dogs. Local Authority and contractors will adhere to the mitigation measures set out in Table 6 section D3.1 of the FFB Habitat Regulations Assessment.</p> <p>To prevent disturbance to dark bellied brent geese, curlew and lapwing on the arable fields landward of the trail. Local Authority and contractors will adhere to the mitigation measures set out Table 6 section D3.1 of the FFB Habitat Regulations Assessment.</p> <p>To ensure that people are aware of the nature conservation sensitivities of the area and act accordingly. Not only will this identify key species such as avocet to be protected on the estuary side of the trail but also those species which can be found feeding on the arable fields landward of the trail such as dark bellied brent geese, curlew and lapwing. Local Authority and contractors will adhere to the mitigation measures</p>

Maps	Route section numbers	Design features of the access proposals	Reasons included
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Signs at strategic points (sections FFB-6-S001 to FFB-6-S008) reminding people to keep dogs under close control. 	<p>set out in Table 6 section D3.1 of the FFB Habs Regs Assessment.</p> <p>To ensure that people are aware of the need to prevent disturbance to key species such as avocet and dark bellied brent geese by dogs.</p>

6.2.5 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:

6.2.6 There are few artificial barriers to accessibility on the proposed route and surfaces and access furniture of the existing paths and footways are generally of a suitable standard for the trail. 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 a field edge at Ramsholt (map 6a, sections FFB-6-S001 and FFB-6-S002);
- the trail would follow an uneven grass path in places along the folding between Ramsholt and Bawdsey (maps 6a to 6c, sections FFB-6-S003 to FFB-6-S008);
- the trail includes a short road section at Bawdsey Quay (map 6c, sections FFB-6-S014 to FFB-6-S018).

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

Where we have proposed exercising statutory discretions:

6.2.7 **Estuary:** This report proposes that the trail should contain sections aligned on the estuary of the River Deben, 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 Melton near Woodbridge, where the A1152 crosses the estuary at Wilford Bridge (see report FFB 3).

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

6.2.8 **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 6.3.1 below.

6.2.9 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 6.3.1. 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 6.3.1] 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.

6.2.10 **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 and mudflat on the Deben Estuary

6.2.11 Access to the saltmarsh and mudflat in the coastal margin will be excluded all year round, seaward of route sections FFB-6-S001 to FFB-1-S019. This is proposed under section 25A of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) because we are satisfied that the land is unsuitable for public access. This exclusion does not apply to the route itself and will have no legal effect on land where coastal access rights do not apply. See map FFB E6 for further detail.

6.2.12 The section 25A restriction is proposed 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 areas of saltmarsh on the river Deben are subject to regular tidal inundation, and are generally uneven and wet underfoot, incised with creeks and channels, some of which would not be readily apparent to walkers.
- The areas of flat on the river Deben are predominantly soft mud at low tide that is difficult to walk on, which becomes inundated when the tide rises.
- Firmer areas along the shoreline that are traditionally used as beaches, including the beach area at Bawdsey, are not excluded under Section 25A.

6.2.13 The directions we give are intended to avoid any new public rights being created over the area in question in view of the difficult terrain of saltmarsh and mudflats.

6.2.14 Because this area of the margin will have coastal access rights excluded from it under section 25A of the CROW Act, we do not expect there to be any impact on nature conservation features from new coastal access rights. Should the exclusion under section 25A become unnecessary at any time in the future we will consider the need for further measures to protect the designated features of interest, which may include restrictions or exclusions on coastal access rights under section 26(3)(a) to protect sensitive wildlife.

Exclusion of access to the seawall

6.2.15 Access to the seawall adjacent to the trail in the coastal margin will be excluded between Ramsholt and Bawdsey all year round, next to route sections FFB-6-S003 to FFB-6-S009. This is proposed under Section 26(3)(a) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) to protect birds using the adjacent saltmarsh and intertidal area from disturbance. See map FFB E6 for further detail.

Avocet is an internationally protected feature of the Deben Estuary, using the intertidal area and adjacent saltmarsh on the River Deben for feeding and roosting. Significant numbers present on this section of the river during the passage and wintering periods. This section of the river also supports a range of nationally protected breeding birds, including Redshank, Oystercatcher, Avocet and Lapwing. The Habitat Regulations Assessment and Nature Conservation Assessment concluded that allowing access seaward of the trail would cause a significant effect by disturbing these birds.

6.2.16 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.

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

6.2.17 **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.

6.2.18 Column 4 of table 6.3.1 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 FFB 6a to FFB 6c as the proposed route of the trail.

6.2.19 If at any time in the future any part of a route section upon which roll-back has been specified needs, in Natural England's view, to change in order for the overall route to remain viable, the new route for the part in question will be determined by Natural England without further reference to the Secretary of State. This will be done in accordance with the criteria and procedures described under the title 'Roll-back' in part 7 of the Overview and section 4.10 of the Coastal Access Scheme. If this happens, the new route will become the approved route for that section for the purposes of the Order which determines where coastal access rights apply.

On sections for which roll-back is not proposed in table 6.3.1, the route is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps FFB 6a to FFB 6c as the proposed route of the trail.

Other future change:

6.2.20 At this point we do not foresee any need for future changes to the access provisions that we have proposed within this report.

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

Establishment of the trail:

6.2.21 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.

6.2.22 Our estimate of the capital costs for physical establishment of the trail on the proposed route between Ramsholt and Bawdsey is £38,500 and is informed by:

- information already held by the access authority, Suffolk County Council, in relation to the management of 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.

6.2.23 There are four main elements to the overall cost:

- A number of new waymarking, information and interpretation signs would be needed.
- A new footbridge is required near Ramsholt.
- A fence 3 metres seaward of the borrowdyke is required to prevent access to the sea wall by walkers and dogs between Ramsholt and Bawdsey.
- New gates will be installed adjacent to route sections FFB-6-S003 to FFB-6-S008.

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 (waymarking and interpretation)	£4,600
Bridges	£900
Fencing	£29,200
Gap creation	£400
Gates	£3,400
Project management	£5,800
Total	£44,300 (Exclusive of any VAT payable)

6.2.24 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, Suffolk 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:

6.2.25 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).

6.2.26 We estimate that the annual cost to maintain the trail between Ramsholt and Bawdsey will be £2,700 (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 6.3: Proposals Tables

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

6.3.1 Section Details: Maps FFB 6a to FFB 6c – Ramsholt to Bawdsey Quay

Key notes on table:

1. Column 2 – an asterisk (*) against the route section number means see also table 6.3.2: Other options considered.
2. Column 4 – ‘No’ means no roll-back is proposed for this route section. ‘Yes – normal’ means roll-back is proposed and is likely to follow the current feature (e.g. cliff edge/beach) for the foreseeable future as any coastal change occurs.
3. Column 4 – ‘Yes – see table 6.3.3’ means roll-back is proposed, but refer to that table below about our likely approach to implementing it for this route section. This is because a more complex situation exists in this case and consideration must be given to how roll-back may happen in relation to excepted land, a protected site etc.
4. Column 5a - Certain coastal land types are included automatically in the coastal margin where they fall landward of the trail if they touch it at some point. The relevant land type (foreshore, cliff, bank, barrier, dune, beach, flat or section 15 land – see Glossary) is shown in this column where appropriate. “No” means none present on this route section.
5. Columns 5b and 5c – Any entry in these columns means we are proposing to align the landward boundary of the coastal margin on this route section with the physical feature(s) shown in 5b, for the reason in 5c. No text here means that for this route section the landward edge of the margin would be that of the trail itself - or if any default coastal land type is shown in 5a, that would be its landward boundary instead.

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
Maps	Route section numbers	Current status of route sections	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
FFB 6a	FFB-6-S001*	Not an existing walked route	No	No			
FFB 6a	FFB-6-S002*	Not an existing walked route	No	No			
FFB 6a	FFB-6-S003*	Not an existing walked route	No	No	Ditch	Clarity and cohesion	
FFB 6b	FFB-6-S004*	Not an existing walked route	No	No	Ditch	Clarity and cohesion	
FFB 6c	FFB-6-S005*	Not an existing walked route	No	No	Ditch	Clarity and cohesion	
FFB 6c	FFB-6-S006*	Not an existing walked route	No	No	Ditch	Clarity and cohesion	

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
Maps	Route section numbers	Current status of route sections	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
FFB 6c	FFB-6-S007*	Not an existing walked route	No	No	Ditch	Clarity and cohesion	
FFB 6c	FFB-6-S008*	Not an existing walked route	No	No			
FFB 6c	FFB-6-S009*	Not an existing walked route	No	No			
FFB 6c	FFB-6-S010	Public highway	No	No			
FFB 6c	FFB-6-S011	Public highway	Yes, see table 6.3.3	No			
FFB 6c	FFB-6-S012	Other existing walked route	Yes, see table 6.3.3	No	Landward edge of road	Clarity and cohesion	
FFB 6c	FFB-6-S013	Other existing walked route	Yes, see table 6.3.3	No	Landward edge of path	Clarity and cohesion	
FFB 6c	FFB-6-S014	Public highway	Yes, see table 6.3.3	No	Hedge bank	Clarity and cohesion	
FFB 6c	FFB-6-S015	Public highway	Yes, see table 6.3.3	No			
FFB 6c	FFB-6-S016	Public highway	Yes, see table 6.3.3	No	Hedge bank	Clarity and cohesion	
FFB 6c	FFB-6-S017	Public highway	Yes, see table 6.3.3	No	Wall	Clarity and cohesion	
FFB 6c	FFB-6-S018	Public highway	Yes, see table 6.3.3	No			
FFB 6c	FFB-6-S019	Other existing walked route	Yes, see table 6.3.3	No	Landward edge of path	Clarity and cohesion	

6.3.2 Other options considered: Maps FFB 6a to FFB 6c – Ramsholt to Bawdsey Quay

Maps	Route section numbers	Other options considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
6a to 6c	FFB-6-S001 to FFB-6-S008	<p>We considered aligning the trail along the top of the seawall between Ramsholt and Bawdsey.</p> <p>We considered aligning the trail inland from the proposed alignment using a mixture of public highways and public footpaths between Ramsholt and Ferry Road, Bawdsey.</p> <p>We considered aligning the trail inland from the proposed alignment using a mixture of public highways and farm tracks between Ramsholt and Ferry Road, Bawdsey.</p>	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Habitat Regulations Assessment for this stretch identified that this alternative option could have a significant effect on dark bellied brent geese and avocet both qualifying features of the SPA. ■ It was closer to the sea and would be more direct and convenient for trail users. ■ It does not involve lengthy sections on public highways. ■ It avoids passing over, and creating spreading room through an important arable area for over wintering dark bellied brent geese. See our published Habitats Regulation Assessment. ■ It is closer to the sea and would be more direct and convenient for trail users. ■ It struck the best overall balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the <i>Coastal Access Scheme</i>.

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.

6.3.3 Roll-back implementation – more complex situations: Map FFB 6c – Bawdsey

Map	Route section numbers	Feature(s) or site(s) potentially affected	Our likely approach to roll-back
FFB 6c	FFB-6-S011 to FFB-6-S019	Buildings and their curtilage, gardens.	If it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of the specified excepted land (e.g. buildings, curtilage, gardens etc), we will choose a route landward of it, following discussions with owners and occupiers.

In relation to all other sections where roll-back has been proposed, any later adjustment of the trail is likely to follow the current feature (e.g. cliff edge/beach) for the foreseeable future as any coastal change occurs.

Part 6.4: Proposals Maps

6.4.1 Map Index

Map reference	Map title
FFB 6a	Ramsholt to Ramsholt Marshes
FFB 6b	Ramsholt Marshes
FFB 6c	Ramsholt Marshes to Bawdsey Quay
FFB E6	Proposed directions under S25A and S26(3)(a) 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

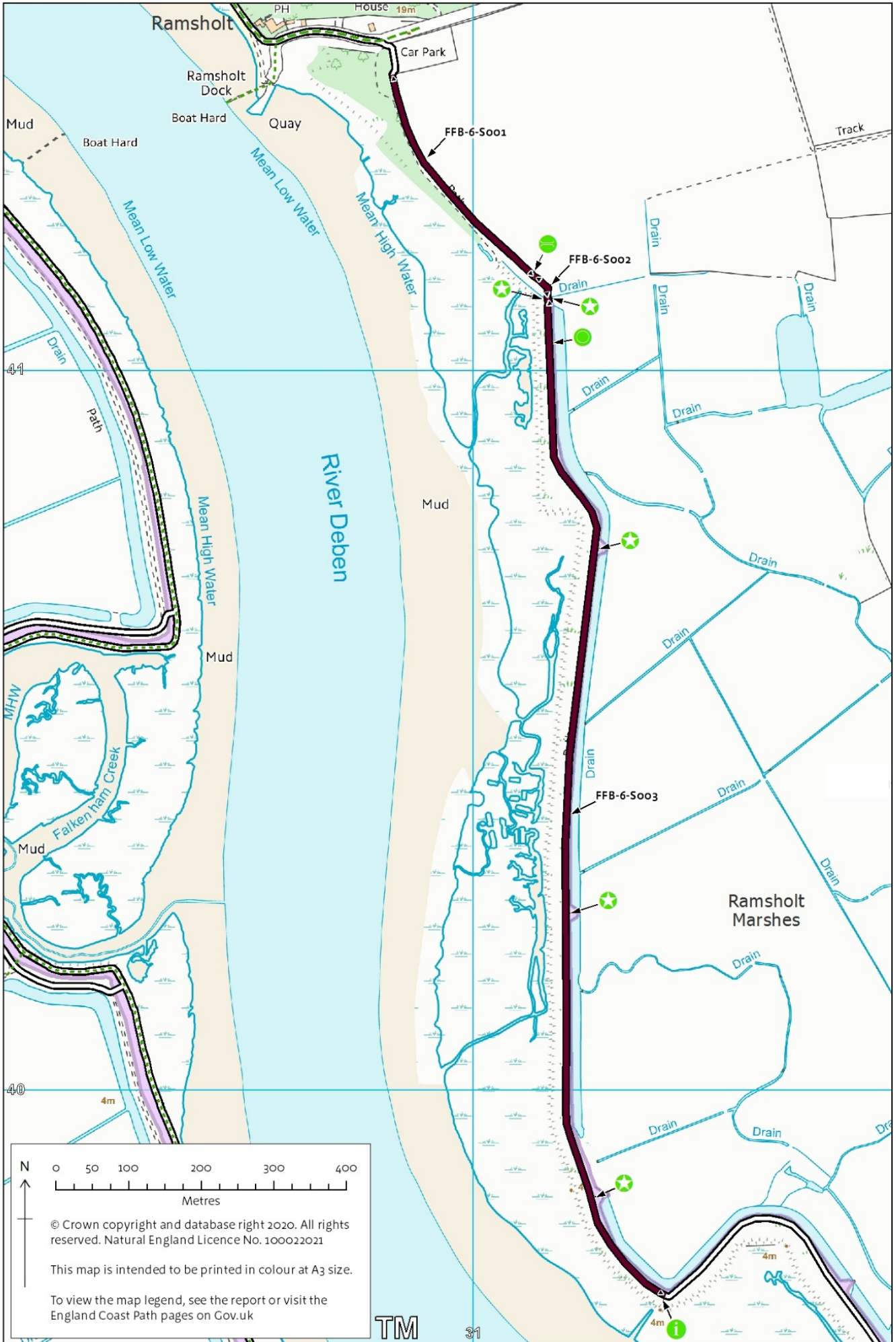
Infrastructure status

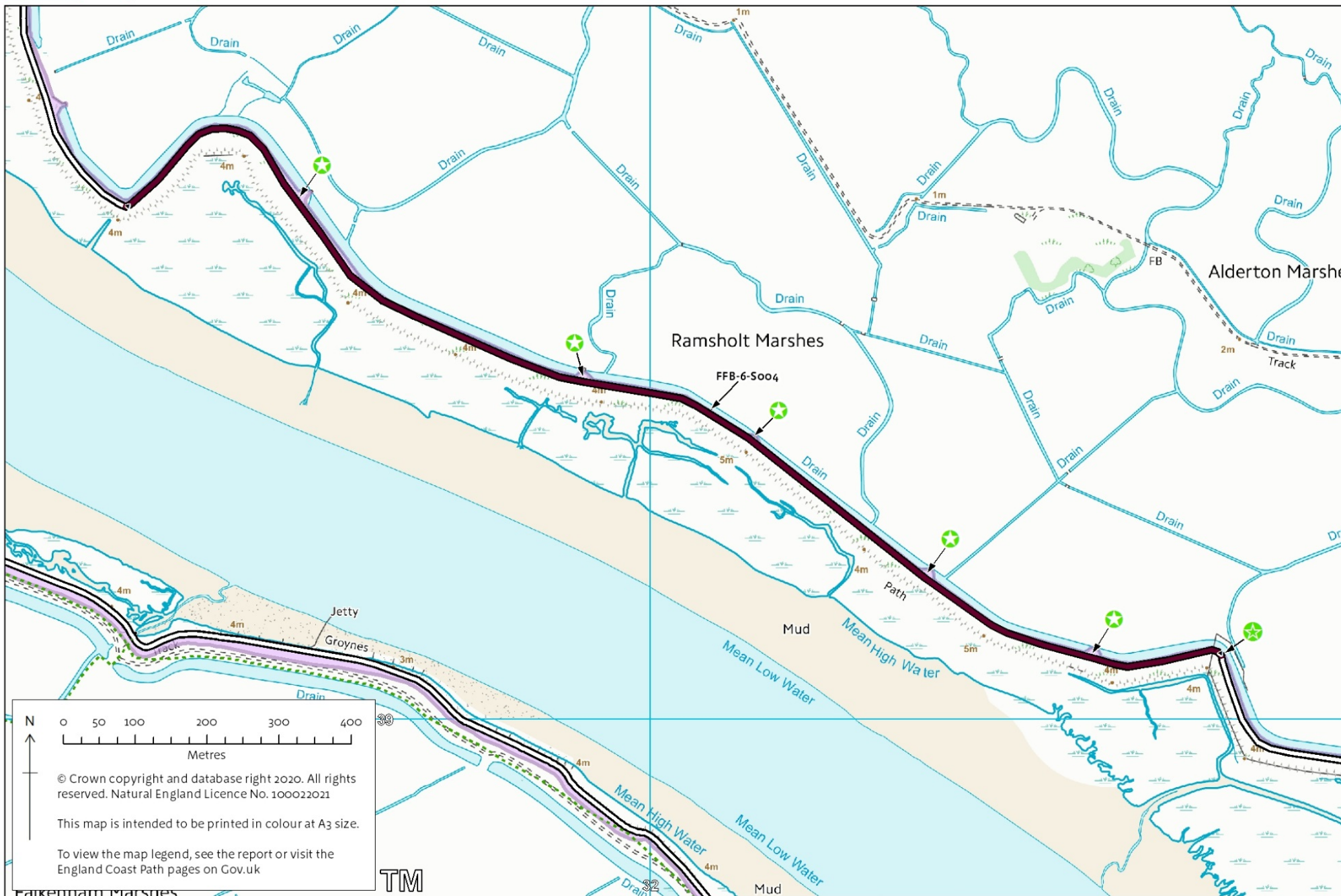
Each symbol shown on the map is colour coded as appropriate, as in this example for a set of steps:

- 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 FFB 6a - Ramsholt to Ramsholt Marshes





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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

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Map FFB 6c - Ramsholt Marshes to Bawdsey Quay



Map FFB E6:

Directions to exclude/restrict access - as proposed for area covered by Report FFB6

Map FFB E6: Directions to exclude/restrict access - as proposed for area covered by Report FFB6

