

Environmental Information Regulations – Response - 27612

pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I request the following information:

1. The number of blue-bordered local direction signs currently remaining on roads for which Suffolk County Council is the highway authority.

Suffolk County Council (SCC) do not maintain a comprehensive asset register for all road signs across the county and are unable to provide this information.

2. Any survey, inventory, asset register or database recording the location of such signs. Suffolk County Council (SCC) do not maintain an asset register for all road signs across the county and unable to provide this information. SCC do maintain a list of known signage defects across our road network. Reviewing this list there is no road sign with a blue border with a recorded defect. It is possible other signs with a blue border are recorded on this defect list but not specified as such in the description field. SCC also use a third-party artificial intelligence survey system gathering data on road condition through mobile phone video surveys collected by highway assessment staff, that also includes information on identified road signs. This is a web-based service under license but does not provide the means to specifically identify locations of blue bordered road signs.

3. Copies of any policies, guidance documents, maintenance strategies or internal procedures relating to their retention, replacement or removal.

SCC do not have any specific policies, guidance documents, maintenance strategies or internal procedures relating to the retention, replacement or removal of blue bordered road signage on our road network. All blue bordered road signs are classified by the signage type (e.g. directional, informational etc) and prioritised for works or replacement in line with SCC's Highway Maintenance Operational Plan (HMOP) available on the SCC public website (link below) or planned programmes of works as described in point 9.

[Highway Maintenance Operational Plan - Suffolk County Council](#)

In support of the above, Suffolk Highways continues to develop its asset management-focused, risk-based approach to maintaining local highway infrastructure. Please see link below:

[Highway Infrastructure Asset Management - Suffolk County Council](#)

4. Details of any special authorisation issued by the Secretary of State or the Department for Transport permitting the continued use of such signs.

SCC does not hold this information.

5. Copies of any legal advice, legal opinion, or internal assessment obtained by the Council regarding the lawfulness of retaining these signs (where exempt information is withheld, please identify the exemption relied upon).

SCC does not hold copies of any legal advice, legal opinion, or internal assessment obtained by the Council regarding the lawfulness of retaining these signs.

6. Details of any planned programme for replacement or removal of these signs, including anticipated timescales.

SCC does not have any planned programme of works specifically targeting the replacement or removal of blue bordered signs within our planned works programme.

7. The estimated cost to Suffolk County Council of replacing all remaining blue-bordered local direction signs.

SCC does not have an estimated cost for replacing all remaining blue bordered local direction signs.

8. The date of manufacture and, where known, the date of installation of the oldest surviving blue-bordered local direction sign within the Suffolk County Council's area.

SCC does not hold this information.

9. The Suffolk County Council's assumed service life for local direction signs and any policy or guidance used to determine when signs should be replaced on grounds of age, condition or obsolescence.

SCC does not use an assumed service life to determine when signs should be replaced on grounds of age, condition or obsolescence.

All road signs across the SCC road network are assessed under our Highway Maintenance Operational Plan (HMOP – Link provided earlier). Our reactive repair work is driven by HMOP which includes the defect intervention criteria, approved by the Cabinet on 12 July 2016 and updated in July 2019. Where road signs are assessed as not meeting the HMOP intervention criteria to warrant urgent repair / replacement, the asset management team will be made aware of any observations where planned works may be recommended and the sign will be added to the countywide road signs defect list, to prioritise on a risk based approach, alongside all other known signing requirements in the county to ensure limited funding is directed to the issues that present the greatest risk. Planned road sign maintenance considers the road hierarchy and road sign type to determine priority as part of the risk-based approach to highway maintenance.

10. The number of blue-bordered local direction signs that remain in service despite having exceeded the Suffolk County Council's expected asset life or replacement threshold.

SCC does not maintain a comprehensive asset register for all road signs across the county and are therefore unable to provide this information.

Given that the final transitional provisions expired more than twelve years ago, I would also be grateful if Suffolk County Council could explain why signs of this age have not yet been replaced through normal maintenance and asset renewal programmes. If Suffolk County Council considers that such signs remain fit for continued use, please provide the criteria used to reach that conclusion.

If Suffolk County Council considers that these signs remain lawful, I would be grateful for a detailed explanation of the statutory provisions or authorisations upon which that view is

based.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR) only cover recorded information held by a public authority at the time of a request. It does not cover opinions, explanations or require new information to be created in order to respond to a request.

Therefore, Suffolk County Council are unable to provide a response to this question under the EIR as it is not recorded information held at the time of request.