Environmental Information Regulations – Response - 28105

Archive records requested

We request access to the documents and plans within the following seven files that relate to:

- *Cuckoo Tye Farm and its access arrangements;*
- *Water Lane / Grass Road U8220;*
- *Mr P. J. Miller, Mr William Miller, Messrs W. J. Miller & Son, insofar as the records concern that land and its access.*

The files are:

*1. **A1/3/4/4110/15 – Finance – Highways: Capital Projects, Long Melford Bypass, 1983–1991.** Correspondence, committee reports and notices of land purchased.*

*2. **A1/3/15/2/117 – Long Melford, 1989–1990.** Correspondence and plans concerning applications to extract gravel and dispose of surplus soil arising from construction of the bypass.*

*3. **A1/3/5/2/5581 – Purchase of land, 14 February 1997.** Plots 6, 8 and 22 for the Long Melford Bypass from Mr P. J. Miller. Document order number **2/5581**. Please include the plot plan, completed acquisition document with its schedules and plans, and relevant correspondence concerning the acquisition and access arrangements.*

*4. **A1/3/15/5/58 – Long Melford Bypass, 1985–1989.** Correspondence and plans, including letters of objection.*

*5. **A1/3/15/2/5065/587 – Long Melford Bypass Public Inquiry, 1988.** General files including objection letters, plans, committee reports and proofs of evidence from SCC and Babergh District Council.*

*6. **A1/3/19/4058/195 – Class 1 Roads, Major Improvements: A134 Long Melford Bypass, 1986–1988.** Includes a plan. Document order number **211/134/08**. Where relevant material has already been supplied under EIR 27898, please identify the corresponding documents rather than provide duplicate copies.*

*7. **A2/3/1/4/4/1973/82 – Suffolk County Council A134 Long Melford Bypass Compulsory Purchase Order 1988.** Catalogue date **5 January 1996**, document order number **A1973/82**, marked Open. Please provide the order and the relevant schedules and plans. If these can be accessed directly through Suffolk Archives, please provide the access details.*

Outstanding implementation records

To carry forward the narrowed scope of EIR 28076, we also request any surviving records establishing:

1. Whether the authorised stopping-up of the specified approximately 30-metre section of Grass Road U8220 (Water Lane) was actually implemented, including completion records, plans, engineering records or notices.

2. If implemented, how public vehicular rights were subsequently preserved, replaced or restored across the present A134 crossing, as evidenced by any surviving order, plan, dedication, construction record or other document.

3. If not implemented, any recorded decision or arrangement establishing that the stopping-up was not carried out and that the crossing was retained as a public vehicular highway.

4. These implementation records may be within the listed files or held elsewhere. Any overlap need only be answered once.

Suffolk County Council (SCC) refuses your request under Regulation 12(4)(b) of the EIR on the grounds that the request is manifestly unreasonable.

Regulation 12(4)(b) provides that a public authority may refuse a request where it is manifestly unreasonable. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) guidance recognises that when considering whether a request is manifestly unreasonable, a public authority may take account of the context and history of requests and the cumulative burden arising from a series of related requests. The guidance further recognises that requests do not need to be considered entirely in isolation where they form part of an ongoing pattern of connected requests.

SCC has considered your request in the context of a substantial series of related EIR requests, internal reviews and associated correspondence submitted between May 2026 and October 2026 concerning, amongst other matters:

- U8220 Water Lane;
- Cuckoo Tye Farm;
- BOAT 35;
- King's Lane;
- the A134 Long Melford Bypass;
- highway status and maintenance;
- stopping-up orders;
- historical highway mapping;
- land acquisition records;
- archive material; and
- associated historic decision-making.

During this period SCC has responded substantively to a number of requests, undertaken searches across multiple service areas, reviewed archive material, disclosed historical records, conducted internal reviews and provided advice and assistance regarding the narrowing of requests.

The request currently under consideration continues enquiries into the same core issues and seeks further information from multiple historic archive files relating to matters that have been the subject of extensive previous requests and disclosures.

Although the request identifies specific archive files, compliance would require SCC to undertake further review of historic records and archive material in connection with the same underlying matters that have already been the subject of extensive investigation, searches, disclosure exercises and correspondence.

SCC notes that information disclosed in response to previous requests has frequently generated further requests seeking additional historical records, supporting material, contextual information and documentary evidence concerning the same dispute.

The Council considers that the burden associated with this request cannot reasonably be separated from the substantial officer time and resources already devoted to the connected series of requests, reviews, archive searches and complaint correspondence.

In these circumstances, SCC is satisfied that this request forms part of a continuing and connected series of enquiries and that the cumulative burden arising from that series is such that the request is manifestly unreasonable within the meaning of Regulation 12(4)(b).

SCC recognises that there is a public interest in transparency and accountability, particularly in relation to historic highway records and decisions affecting the matters raised in your request.

However, SCC also considers there to be a significant public interest in ensuring that public authorities are able to carry out their statutory functions effectively and are not required to divert a disproportionate amount of time and resources to responding to an ongoing series of substantially connected requests.

Having considered the circumstances of this case, SCC is satisfied that the public interest in maintaining the exception outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

SCC has previously provided advice and assistance in relation to requests concerning these matters, including encouraging requests to be narrowed and focused on specific records where possible.

Notwithstanding that assistance, SCC considers that the current request continues a substantial and ongoing series of enquiries concerning the same underlying issues. Accordingly, SCC does not consider that any further practical narrowing of the request would remove the cumulative burden associated with processing the request in the wider context described above.