

Accreditation presentation to Suffolk Archives

The Hold, Friday 11th November 2022

I am delighted to be here this afternoon to join the celebrations for Suffolk Archives achieving provisional archive accreditation. It is particularly exciting to be able to make the presentation in this wonderful, state of the art, new building, The Hold, which we were lucky enough to get a behind-the-scenes tour of this morning.

Archive Service Accreditation is the UK standard for archive services, defining good practice and identifying agreed standards. It encourages and supports development, enabling archive services to demonstrate their value. It is a national benchmark and quality standard, and recognises good performance across three important areas – organisational health, collections management and collaboration.

There are over 2500 archive services in the UK and, so far, fewer than 200 have achieved accreditation, or provisionally accredited status – which really underlines what an impressive achievement this is.

The Accreditation Panel recognised Suffolk Archives as a service undergoing a transformation, with The Hold at the heart of this. As well as improving storage and facilities, it provides a major step forward in the reach of the archive service across Suffolk. The investment in the service from external partners, national funders and Suffolk County Council is a welcome recognition of the value and impact of the service's work. Similarly the partnership with the University of Suffolk provides the potential for collaboration and innovation for the benefit of a range of stakeholders. This is borne out by the number of external partners who are present here today, and who have worked with Suffolk Archives over the past few years to produce an extensive range of exhibitions and events.

And, although we are standing in The Hold, we need to remember that Suffolk Archives serves a wide range of communities and is always looking to engage with new and diverse ones. The service's offer is also provided through the branches at Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft, and through an increasing range of external events to reach groups and organisations throughout the county.

Delays caused by the pandemic, and the subsequent impact of moving into The Hold, mean that Suffolk Archives remain as a provisionally accredited service for now, but the Accreditation Panel recognises the substantial progress made by the service. This is a significant achievement of which everyone involved should

be proud. I am really pleased to be here with you all this afternoon to celebrate your success, and many congratulations on your achievement.