Norfolk Record Office
Archive Collecting Policy

1. This policy statement relates to the Norfolk Record Office, The Archive Centre, Martineau Lane, Norwich NR1 2DQ.

2. The Norfolk Record Office is part of Norfolk Cultural Services, within Norfolk County Council's Department of Community Services. Cultural Services also encompass the Norfolk Library and Information Service, Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, Norfolk Arts Service, Norfolk Adult Education Service, Norfolk Guidance Service, and Active Norfolk. The Norfolk Record Office is a joint service of the County Council and the councils of the City of Norwich, the boroughs and the districts in Norfolk, all of which are represented on the Norfolk Records Committee, through which the Record Office is democratically accountable. Other stakeholders, with non-voting representatives on the Records Committee, are the Bishop of Norwich, the Norfolk Record Society and the Custos Rotulorum (i.e., ‘the Keeper of the Rolls’; historically, the Lord Lieutenant was Keeper of the Rolls and Records of the County) together with three co-opted members and an observer, who represent a wide range of interests within the county.

3. The Norfolk Record Office is the only public archive service in the county of Norfolk. It collects and preserves records of historical significance relating to all aspects of the county of Norfolk and makes them available to as many people as possible.

4. The Norfolk Record Office’s collection has been ‘Designated’ in its entirety as being of outstanding international importance by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (now the Arts Council England). The Norfolk Record Office is rated by The National Archives as a four-star archive service (the highest category). Some of the Norfolk Record Office’s records have been inscribed in the UNESCO UK Memory of the World Register as being of outstanding importance and value to the United Kingdom.

5. The Record Office seeks to abide by all relevant archive legislation, including the following:

- The Public Records Act, 1958, Section 4.
6. The Norfolk Record Office is appointed by the Lord Chancellor as a place of deposit for public records and is recognized by The National Archives: Historical Manuscripts Commission in respect of tithe and manorial records. The Norfolk Record Office is also a ‘The National Archives approved repository’ under The National Archives’ inspection régime.

7. The Norfolk Record Office is designated by the Bishop of Norwich as the Norwich Diocesan Record Office in respect of diocesan and parochial records (including Lothingland deanery in Suffolk) and by the Bishop of Ely as the Diocesan Record Office in respect of diocesan tithe maps for Norfolk parishes in the Diocese of Ely and parochial records from parishes in the deanery of Feltwell and Fincham. The Norfolk Record Office also collects records relating to other religions and beliefs.

8. ‘Records’ are documents of any date created or accumulated by organizations or individuals during the conduct of their affairs. They may include manuscript, printed, typescript and computer-generated text, musical and other notation, maps, plans, drawings and photographs, and documents in digital formats.

9. The Record Office will acquire and preserve records of any date assessed as being worthy of permanent preservation. These include, but are not limited to the following:

- Norfolk County Council and its predecessors.
- Local authorities in respect of which the County Council is the statutory archive authority.
- Statutory bodies operating within Norfolk.
- Public records offered to the Norfolk Record Office under the Public Records Acts.
- Manorial and tithe records.
- The Diocese of Norwich.
- Ecclesiastical parishes in respect of which the Record Office is the Diocesan Record Office.
- Organizations, businesses, families and individuals.
- Sound recordings and related material, in connexion with the Norfolk Sound Archive (which has its own Collecting Policy).

10. The Record Office recognizes that people from many different cultural backgrounds have played a significant rôle in the history and culture of Norfolk and will bear this in mind when collecting material.

11. Records will be accepted by transfer from the constituent authorities of the joint records service and by donation, deposit or purchase. Priority in acquiring records will be given to those which are at risk of loss, destruction or damage.

12. Records relating to places which, during the period when the records were created or accumulated, were not in the county of Norfolk nor created by bodies or individuals based in Norfolk will only be acquired if they are part of an archive group which does relate to such a place, body or individual.
The Record Office recognizes that the integrity of archival groups should be preserved as far as practicable, and will consult, where appropriate, with other record repositories in respect of archives which relate partly to other counties, in seeking to ensure that they are housed in the most appropriate repository.

13. Records are acquired with the intention that they shall be preserved permanently, but, exceptionally, they may be reviewed at a later date: for example, in relation to subsequent accessions of or relating to the same body or individual. No deposited records will be destroyed or transferred to another repository without the permission of the owner or depositor.

14. It is a condition of acceptance that records will be available for public access (subject to their being fit for production) either immediately or from a specified date, which may be at the end of a statutory period of closure or agreed in respect of non-official records between the County Archivist and the depositor.

15. The Record Office does not actively seek to acquire copies or transcripts of documents, historical and genealogical notes and pedigrees. It may, however, accept such material as part of a larger archival group or if it complements another archive held by or likely to be acquired by the Record Office. Copies or transcripts may also be accepted if the original is unavailable or is believed to be at risk.

16. The Record Office does not seek to acquire paintings, prints, engravings, newspapers, published material\(^1\) including ephemera or films, but will accept such material if it was created or collected by an archive-creating body or individual, usually, though, not exclusively, as part of a larger archival group.

17. The Record Office will not normally acquire records in a format or language which require for their preservation, consultation or interpretation, storage conditions or specialist skills or equipment which the Record Office does not, or does not plan to, provide. If such records are at risk of loss or destruction, however, they may be accepted on a temporary basis until a suitable repository for them can be identified.

18. When assessing potential donations or deposits, the Record Office will, when appropriate, advise owners and custodians of other record repositories and of museums and libraries with relevant collecting policies. In particular, films will be referred to the East Anglian Film Archive, published material to Norfolk Library and Information Service, and paintings and objects to Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service.

19. This policy statement was approved by the Norfolk Records Committee on 11 January 2012. It will be reviewed as necessary and not later than five years from this date.

\(^1\) The Record Office does acquire published material for its own reference library.