

Consultation responses and comments

Ref.	Comment	Name/organisation	Response by (D)RO
1	There are concerns in using pubs (as polling stations) from a religious/cultural viewpoint as well as concerns over accessibility.	Shelly Darwin – Borough councillor for St John’s ward.	We recognise sensitivity is needed around the use of pubs and places of worship, but in some circumstances the use of the venue cannot be avoided due to lack of an alternative.
2	Schools are not always happy being used as polling stations; next year will be Borough, SCC and PCC elections therefore it’s likely to be busy.	Inga Lockington – Borough and County Councillor for St Margaret’s ward and St Margaret’s and Westgate division.	The recommendations include a number of venues as alternatives to schools and we continue to seek replacements for those remaining.
3	<p>Polling station locations can have cultural or religious issues for people in minority groups.</p> <p>There are recognised issues for people with autism when voting; there were concerns during the last vote regarding the help people needed in the booths.</p>	Audrey Ludwig – Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality (ISCRE)	<p>We recognise sensitivity is needed around the use of pubs and places of worship, but in some circumstances the use of the venue cannot be avoided due to lack of an alternative.</p> <p>Beyond the scope of a PDR.</p>
4	<p>Any new locations should be accessible by foot or public transport for the visually impaired.</p> <p>It’s difficult for the visually impaired to make a mark on the ballot paper so many choose postal votes; but it’s an individual choice whether to attend a station, so it needs to be made possible for people and not just with an over large ballot paper as this won’t help all visually impaired.</p>	Simon Daws – Suffolk Guide Dog Forum	<p>This is our aim for all electorate.</p> <p>This suggestion is beyond the scope of a PDR. The Returning Officer will ensure that all polling station staff are briefed on what support can be made available to voters to enable people to cast their vote.</p>
5	The point on visually impaired being able to exercise their vote in a confidential manner is important; it currently means individuals need some sight or must share their voting intentions.	Steve Hodgkiss - Disability Forum for Suffolk and ESAB	This suggestion is beyond the scope of a PDR. The Returning Officer will ensure that all polling station staff are briefed on what support can be made

			available to voters to enable people to cast their vote.
6	The (IBC elections) website detail should include the polling stations and how accessible they are with any alternative accesses covered.	Becca Jackaman – Progression Sessions.	This will be included in future information provided on our website in the run up to future elections.
7	Particularly concerned over wheelchair users.	Ron Llewellyn - public	All polling stations are checked to ensure they are wheelchair accessible.
8	Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your review. Having considered what is proposed I do not have any specific comments to make; the merger of some districts appears sensible, and the move away from using schools as polling stations will, I am sure, be welcomed by the schools concerned.	Stephen Baker – Regional Returning Officer for Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner elections.	Noted.
9	St Mary at Stoke Church Hall - In my view, the building is absolutely fine for this purpose. Plenty of room for standard layout. Good ramp access for those using wheels – either disabled or pushchairs. Off road car park which also helps. Sufficient outside lighting which was important at both ends of the day. There is a kitchen and toilet facilities for myself and the Poll Clerk.	Presiding Officer	The access and facilities at this polling station are good and we hope to continue to use this location in future.
10	Portakabin off Birkfield Drive - This was okay but not ideal. Rather cramped conditions for privacy at busier periods. Noisy when it rained, the toilet wasn't particularly pleasant and set down wasn't ideal in the dark. The Voters didn't appear to mind but a larger and more permanent type building would be preferable.	Presiding Officer	This supports the need to move away from using temporary mobile units.
11	I have been fortunate to be allocated the position at the Indoor Bowls Centre, Rushmere Road Ipswich for many years. The facilities at this venue are extremely user friendly, not only for Poll Station staff, but for the electorate to visit. Parking facilities are excellent and the room	Poll Clerk	The access and facilities at this polling station are good and we hope to continue to use this location in future.

	provided by the Bowls Centre is large enough to allow an efficient layout to be achieved. The staff of the Bowls Centre are most helpful and always eager to ensure the day runs smoothly which we, and the electorate appreciate.		
12	The County Council will not be making any response to the consultation.	Tim Ryder on behalf of Nicola Beach, Returning Officer for Suffolk County Council.	Noted.
13	Colchester Road Baptist Church polling station - Voters come in from the roads in the immediate vicinity e.g. Ely Road to the polling station at Colchester Road Baptist Church and ask why they can't vote at the polling station that is so close to their home but have to go to the Scout Hall (in Dumbarton Road), which is some distance away. Could the Church Hall be a dual station? Also, the polling station at the Church is some distance for the people that live in the HA district, but I can't think of another community building that might be more centrally located for them.	Poll Clerk	The point regarding HA polling district voters is noted as is the fact that a better alternative is not obviously available. This part of town has long been a challenge in terms of providing polling stations central to their polling district..
14	Inspire Suffolk in Lindbergh Road polling station – The location is suitable and the access is adequate. There is ample car parking, but it can be a long walk for somebody with mobility problems. It can be noisy, as the site is also used for fitness classes and children's activities. It is a good size and adequate space.	Presiding Officer	The access and facilities at Inspire polling station are good and we hope to continue to use this location in future. Future monitoring of the noise issue will take place.
15	Having been a Poll Clerk in various locations, including the Suffolk Records Office, Sir John Mills Theatre, Handford Hall Primary School and All Saints Church, the Salvation Army Hall at 121 Bramford Road, (JC IP44), is by far the best for access for the electors and works well for polling station staff. The building's entrance hall is next to both the car park and footpath and is accessed via a permanent concrete ramp with handrail, or 3 shallow	Poll Clerk	The access and facilities at The Salvation Army Hall polling station are good and we hope to continue to use this location in future.

	<p>steps, and the hall itself is through a door about 15ft from the main entrance – all on the flat. It is easy to display all the appropriate signage and to arrange the hall to adhere to Electoral Commission requirements and maintain the standards and secrecy of the ballot. There is an attached car park and good lighting, both inside and out. The key holders are extremely helpful and go above and beyond the basics to make sure that everything is available for the day.</p>		
16	<p>St Augustine’s Church Hall polling station – Location is suitable, access is adequate. Good car park and easy access.</p>	<p>Ms Finch - St Augustine’s Church Hall</p>	<p>The access and facilities at St Augustine’s Church Hall polling station are good and we hope to continue to use this location in future.</p>
17	<p>We are happy with the proposed voting arrangements for the CSNI polling stations</p>	<p>Arthur Charvonja – Returning Officer for Central Suffolk and North Ipswich Constituency.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>