

Comments and representations from stakeholders during consultation

Comment	Name/organisation	Response by (D)RO
You are gathering information re voting accessibility for people with mobility issues. I have mobility issues and use a postal vote. I have encouraged my 90 year old mum to do the same. It's easier than trying to attend polling stations. I just wish putting papers into different envelopes wasn't quite so complicated.	Madeline Johnson - Individual	<i>Postal voting can be a preferred method of voting for some people unable to access a polling station easily. Postal voting as a method of voting is beyond the scope of this review.</i>
There is a long standing problem in that large print voting forms are still not available to aid those with a visual impairment. The current offering is to provide candidate information in large print and then a cardboard overlay to the normal sized voting form so that Visually Impaired folk that can read the large print information can index down the voting form using the template to place their cross. That is, if your particular polling station has such readily to hand. However if you are in receipt of a postal vote, which a great many disabled are, you have to chase down the large print information and a template for yourself – experience gained over a number of years representing those with a visual impairment who wish to exercise their voting right personally and privately would show this is not easy at all. Often all we receive when raising the	Stephen Hodgkiss – Suffolk Sight	<i>All Ipswich polling stations provide handheld large print ballot paper templates and a tactile voting device to assist with marking the ballot paper. Polling station staff are trained to offer assistance when requested, for example by reading out candidate names in order from a ballot paper. Visually impaired voters are welcome to take their own device or a companion to assist if preferred. If there are any other reasonable adjustments that can be made to the polling station to assist a visually impaired voter, then we would encourage the voter to contact the elections office well in advance of an election to discuss. Although postal voting is beyond the scope of this review, assistance can be given to postal voters on an individual basis. Again, we would encourage any voter with a physical or sensory disability to contact the elections office to discuss how we can best assist.</i>

<p>issue with election officials and officers is a statement that “this is the process, we cannot change anything and if you cannot partake via this means then perhaps someone else can assist you completing the form”! The current situation needs to be modified to ensure those with any form of disability including a visual impairment have equal access and their privacy respected when taking part in the electoral process.</p>		
<p>Thank you for the information regarding the council’s review of polling district and polling places. I note from your website that you are consulting with the electorate and other stakeholders. The input from residents and local stakeholders will bring the insight needed to inform the final recommendations for Ipswich Council to consider and I therefore do not believe that a response as the Suffolk Police Area Returning Officer is necessary. Thank you for sharing the information and providing the opportunity to respond.</p>	<p>Ian Gallin – Police Area Returning Officer for Suffolk</p>	<p><i>No recommendations.</i></p>
<p>Of the 69 IBC polling stations, Whitton KC is the largest and Whitton KB the seventh largest. There is a clear need to rearrange the polling boundaries to get both of these catchment areas to less than 2,000 electors to be manageable. I believe that</p>	<p>Tony Gould – Borough Councillor for Whitton Ward</p>	<p><i>Whitton. A fourth polling district will be required in Whitton to take account of the new northern suburb development, once a high proportion of properties have been completed. The polling station for this is likely to be the new community building once it has been developed. We are</i></p>

the answer lies in the need to make future provision for IGS. I would vote for a large one-day portakabin on Oxlip Boulevard, or maybe in the car park for May 2024. This would help reduce KC and KB, the reallocated voters forming KD to become a permanent polling station in due course. KD might migrate further East as IGS is developed.		<i>committed to not using costly mobile units, with inadequate facilities for both voters and staff, unless that is the only option.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have 3 stations that serve a large number of voters. • Accessibility is reasonable at all 3 (I've had no reps from residents since 2018 re accessibility.) • The eventual opening of a 4th station at Henley Gate will be vital - will that be for 2024? • There probably isn't another suitable location in Whitton for a 4th one. • Assume that boundary changes/ impact of IGS will eventually mean a rethink necessary. • I'm glad that The Beeches CP School is no longer used because the accessibility is not very good and there is negative impact on the running of the school. 	Christine Shaw – Borough Councillor for Whitton Ward	<p><i>Whitton.</i></p> <p><i>A fourth polling district will be required in Whitton to take account of the new northern suburb development, once a high proportion of properties have been completed. The polling station for this is likely to be the new community building once it has been developed (this will neither be ready nor needed for the May 2024 elections.)</i></p> <p><i>We are committed to not using schools where possible (to avoid disruption for the school) providing there is an alternative venue offering adequate facilities within the correct polling district.</i></p>
St John's Church Cowper Street - I think the polling station at St John's on Cowper Street works well and I would like to see it retained.	Christine Hayward - Voter	<i>This venue has good facilities and is placed in a convenient location for voters. We hope to retain this venue, subject to it being available to hire for future elections.</i>

St John's Church Cowper Street - Good facilities- very friendly and welcoming	Beverley Roddie - Voter	<i>This venue has good facilities and is placed in a convenient location for voters. We hope to retain this venue, subject to it being available to hire for future elections.</i>
Priory Heath - Ravenswood Primary School is a great location.	Jacqueline Robson - Voter	<i>This venue has good facilities and is placed in a convenient location for voters. We hope to retain this venue, subject to availability for future elections.</i>
The Hope Centre - This is an unsuitable polling station as it has no parking so I cannot drop in on my way home from work. I do not understand why it changed. The St John Ambulance building off Blanche Street/Cemetery Road was perfect as it had plenty of parking. I could n up in there and be done in 5 minutes and always voted.	Nicola Rouse - Voter	<i>Car parking is not a requirement to have for polling station venues and it can be difficult to find suitable venues with parking in a busy town centre. The change from St John Ambulance building in Blanche Street was due to the availability to hire the venue from the private owner. The Hope Centre offers good voting facilities, but no car parking. It is however a very short distance to the public car park on Cobden Place. We will continue to look for an equally suitable venue, in the correct polling district location, which also has car parking, but do not think such a venue available for hire exists currently.</i>
Bramford Road 24 th Scout Hall - This hall is in a difficult geographical place. There is limited parking for voters generally and for the disabled who have no choice but to drive and it is also situated at a very busy junction. Last time I voted there vehicles were queuing on the road to get in the car park as there is hardly any on street parking in that area.	Marion Ransby - Voter	<i>Car parking is not a requirement to have for polling station venues and it can be difficult to find suitable venues with parking in a busy town. Having spoken to polling station staff at this venue, the car park is not overly busy. The consultee appears to have experienced an unusually busy time on this occasion. For those voters who need to drive to the polling station due to a disability, we can</i>

		<i>trial reserving some parking spaces closest to the building for future elections.</i>
Stoke Park - Additional space or new space within the Willows Children Centre is likely to be needed in order to accommodate 3 polling stations.	Adam Keer – Presiding Officer	<i>The proposal would be to use an additional room within the centre, rather than squeeze all 3 polling stations into the existing room, subject to hiring availability.</i>
St Margaret's - As a voter in St Margaret's (and who happens to live opposite the Christchurch Park gates on Bolton Lane) I don't understand why my polling station isn't in the Reg Driver Centre as it used to be, but at a venue 5-6 mins walk away. It's only a mild inconvenience, but I don't understand it.	Stephen Anderson - Voter	<i>A voter living closer to another polling station and having to travel further to their allocated polling station is not ideal and we aim to avoid this where possible. Due to the boundaries of each polling district, there will always be some voters living much closer to their allocated polling station than other voters. The Reg Driver Centre has been trialled as a “double” polling place before, to accommodate the voters from two polling districts, but the feedback received was that it is too small for the high turnout of voters in St Margaret's ward. Should better alternatives become available we will consider these.</i>
Whitton - Henley Gate. Although I do not vote in this polling district, I live around the Whitton area and visit Castle Hill United Reformed Church on a weekly basis. I was unaware of the development of Henley Gate. I hope the plans are available for the public to read on the IBC website.	Becca Jackaman - Voter	<i>Not relevant to the polling district review.</i>
Cauldwell Hall Road church - Very accessible. Very clear voting instructions.	Maggie Dioley - Voter	<i>This venue has good facilities and is placed in a convenient location for voters. We hope to retain this venue, subject to it being available to hire for future elections.</i>

Ascension Hall, Larchcroft Road. This polling station is very well placed to serve the local area and there is not usually a wait for voting.	Rachel - Voter	<i>This venue has good facilities and is placed in a convenient location for voters. We hope to retain this venue, subject to it being available to hire for future elections.</i>
Westgate - There should be an option to vote online. It's insane that in 2023 this isn't available! It would encourage busy younger people to vote.	Lois Ransome - Voter	<i>Whilst it is noted that an online system may encourage young voters to take part, this is beyond the scope of the review. Online voting is currently not a voting option in the UK and this is a matter for central Government.</i>
Stoke Park - The turnout in IA polling district at local elections has been about 16% in the last 2 years. This is below the average for the town, i.e. in both 2022 and 2023, there were far more polling stations showing higher turnout compared to IA and those below. We believe IA polling station needs to be kept in the vicinity.	Edward Phillips – Borough Councillor for Bixley Ward	<i>There are no buildings to hire within the IA polling district. Previously a private sheltered housing complex allowed the hire of a communal room within its building, but this is no longer available. To keep the polling station within the IA polling district, a temporary mobile unit would need to be hired. Mobile units provide poor facilities for staff and voters and are extremely costly. Polling station IA will remain within Stoke Park and will be considerably closer to all residential properties within polling district IA than the comparable distance for some other polling stations within the Borough. The turnout figures referred to occurred when the polling station was situated within the polling district (2022 - Vinnicombe Court, 2023 - Mobile Unit on Birkfield Drive) and so it is unlikely that lower than average turnout is caused by the location of the polling station.</i>
Ipswich parliamentary constituency should include all wards in Ipswich borough. None should be lumped in with other constituencies.	Jonathan Williamson - Voter	<i>Parliamentary constituencies are beyond the scope of this review which is specifically on polling districts.</i>

