



Mid Suffolk District Council

Report for The Stonhams Ward – March 2018

Independent Survey finds residents in favour of the creation of a single council

Almost two thirds of residents (62%) are in favour of the creation of a single council for Babergh and Mid Suffolk, an independent survey has found.

As part of wider public engagement activities on the proposal to create a single council to replace Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils, ComRes, a leading market research company, carried out an independent telephone survey of 4,000 residents - 2,000 from each district. Respondents reflected the gender, age, ethnicity and socio-economic grades of the local population.

The results of the survey, which were presented to councillors from both districts today, shows that in Babergh 54% of respondents are in favour of the creation of a single council and 35% are unfavourable. In Mid Suffolk, 69% of respondents are in favour of the creation of a single council and 22% are unfavourable.

Overall, the survey showed extremely high support from electors for five key objectives of creating a single district council:

- Long term financial stability to protect the services that are most important to residents (93%)
- Delivering services that are better tailored to the needs of local residents (93%)
- Meet the challenges facing local government (89%)
- Maintain low council tax (88%)
- Create better relationships with local communities (88%)

The survey found that nearly three quarters of respondents (70%) were aware of the proposals and more than half (57%) knew a little or a lot about it.

More than half of respondents (54%) were not concerned about the proposal to create a single council, while 43% were concerned.

The survey found that support for the vulnerable is considered to be the most important priority for local government; and residents think that the creation of a single council would have a positive effect on older people, disabled people and young people.



The results of the independent telephone survey will be included alongside all the other responses to the initial public engagement and the costs and benefits in a business case, which is due to be published in the spring.

The Leader of Babergh District Council, Councillor John Ward said: "This independent telephone survey, which asked a representative sample of the local population, shows that seven years on from the previous referendum on this issue, more people in Babergh are now in favour of the creation of a single council than those who are not. Residents are clear that we should be prioritising financial stability and providing better local services that are more tailored to the needs of our residents. Dissolving Babergh and Mid Suffolk to create a new single district council will ensure we can deliver what our residents want.

A lot has changed since 2011 and it was essential that we carried out this engagement to understand current public opinion in Babergh to inform the business case for creating a new council. Once the business case has been drafted and fully debated by all councillors, then it will be put to the electors of Babergh to vote on through a referendum this summer."

Leader of Mid Suffolk District Council, Councillor Nick Gowrley said: "The results of this independent telephone survey reinforces the views expressed by Mid Suffolk electors in the 2011 referendum, and clearly show that more residents in Mid Suffolk are in favour and unconcerned about the proposed creation of a single council than there were back in 2011. . Our residents have spoken and they are clear what they want us to do, now is the time to put this to the Secretary of State and make this a reality."