

APPENDIX 5: COMRES OPINION POLLING - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1	<p>Is 1000 a big enough sample to be truly representative?</p>	<p>By surveying 1001 respondents, we are able to say that we can be 95% confident that the results are representative of the whole electorate of West Suffolk, plus or minus 3%. So for example, if 50% of respondents said they agreed with a statement, we can be 95% certain that if the entire population was surveyed, between 47% and 53% would say they agree with the statement. Put differently, if the survey was repeated, 19 times of 20 it would return the same results.</p> <p>In general terms, 1000 respondents is a common sample size for local surveys. ComRes national surveys usually cover a representative sample of 2000 respondents.</p> <p>Ensuring the survey is representative of the local population is also important. ComRes set quotas by various demographic groups and weighted data to ensure it reflects the profile of the electorate in West Suffolk.</p>
2	<p>How many residents were contacted by ComRes during the polling?</p>	<p>ComRes carried out surveys with 1001 electors in West Suffolk – i.e. those aged 18 years or over and eligible to vote in local government elections in either Forest Heath or St Edmundsbury.</p> <p>In order to ensure the characteristics of the 1001 respondents were representative of the population of West Suffolk as a whole, ComRes used screening questions to ensure age, gender, socio-economic grade, ethnicity and location quotas were fulfilled before proceeding with the questionnaire. This meant that more calls were made than just the 1001. It is usually the case that around 10-12 times the number of calls need to be made in local surveys of this nature to meet the sample size requirement.</p>
3	<p>How did ComRes get hold of the phone numbers?</p>	<p>ComRes used a mixture of landline numbers within West Suffolk and mobile phone numbers that were registered to the area. These numbers are bought in by ComRes from a reputable fieldwork agency that partners ComRes on many of its projects.</p>
4	<p>What proportion of the respondents came from the towns or villages?</p>	<p>ComRes set quotas and broke down the overall sample to be representative by ward areas, to make sure a representative sample of people were included from each of the areas of West Suffolk. ComRes also weighted data to be representative by Council area and ward, ensuring that results fit the profile of</p>

		West Suffolk overall.
5	How long did each phone call take?	Just over 10 minutes on average.
6	Why did the survey include two questions about how favourable respondents were towards the single council proposals?	The second question was asked in order to give respondents the opportunity to revisit the answer to the first question once they had thought about it some more and had received further information about the decision to create a new single District-level Council. This is a common technique in opinion polling in order to gauge how opinion may shift.