

Philip's Panel: Unitary Survey Results

The results of the first Opinion Panel on local government structure are set out below.

1. Do you think it makes sense to consider the right structure of local government for Shropshire:
Now 44% After the Lyons Review 13% After Legislation known 18%
After both Lyons and Legislation 24% After next local elections 1%
A majority of 56% felt now (i.e. in January 2007) was not the most sensible time to consider the right structure of local government for Shropshire.
2. Do you feel you have sufficient information to make an informed choice about the arguments for and against Unitary Authority?
Yes 55% No 45%
3. Do you think the issues are too complicated, as suggested by the Proponents of Unitary, to allow ordinary people to have a view?
Yes 13% No 87%
There was strong cross-party consensus from supporters of each political grouping, in rejecting this argument by more than 75%.
4. Do you think a county-wide referendum should have been called to allow everyone affected in Shropshire to have their say?
Yes 81% No 19%
Both Conservatives (93%) and Labour (100%) believed that a referendum should have been called whilst a large proportion of Liberal Democrats (45%) disagreed.
5. Do you think two Unitary councillors can represent 5,000 people as well as one County and three District councillors?
Yes 20% No 71% Don't know 9%
This view was shared by supporters of each political grouping
6. Do you believe that a Unitary Authority will deliver better services for less cost?
Yes 19% No 71% Don't know 10%
There was cross-party consensus on this view.
7. Do you think the introduction of 27 Local Area Committees with budgets allocated by the Unitary Authority will allow for greater local decision-making than the present Two Tier system of County and District/Borough Councils?
Yes 13% No 72% Don't know 15%
Supporters of most political groups apart from the Liberal Democrats each of which rejected this argument by more than 50%.
8. Do you think centralising local government in one council for Shropshire moves a step closer to regional government for the West Midlands?
Yes 69% No 20% Don't know 12%
There was cross-party consensus on this view.
9. Bridgnorth District Council and South Shropshire District Council are holding separate ballots during January. How do you intend to vote?

Bridgnorth District Council
A: For an Enhanced Two Tier 83% B: For Unitary 17%

South Shropshire District Council
No: For an Enhanced Two Tier 74% Yes: For Unitary 26%
57% of Liberal Democrat votes were in favour of Enhanced Two Tier and opposed to Unitary
12. Philip will make a donation to the local branch of whichever of the following charities receives the most votes from Panel members.
Severn Hospice 50%
Macmillan Cancer Relief 44%
Diabetes UK 6%
A cheque has now been sent to Severn Hospice,