

Executive Summary

The Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol: Consensus or Conflict?

Background

The survey, conducted mid to late October 2021, included 1002 participantsⁱ from all local council areas. In sum;

- 54.5% of respondents were female, 45.1% male and 0.4% other.
- 39.8%, 26.8% and 33.3% described themselves as either unionist, nationalist or neither unionist nor nationalist (hereafter neither).
- 33.6% of respondents were aged 16-34, 46.3% aged 35-59 and 20.1% were 60+.

The aim of the survey was to examine attitudes towards the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol (hereafter the Protocol), the easements/mitigations announced by the EC in October, and the UK government's proposal regarding the movement of goods. The survey provided an opportunity to examine voting intention and constitutional preference.

Overview

There is no doubt that the Protocol has raised tensions, and caused trade and other disruptions. However, in terms of making robust assessments of the Protocol's impact upon trade and the economy, it is axiomatic that debate and discourse can only be improved by additional empirical data. The debate began - after a majority of the UK electorate voted for Brexit - with a threat of violence, ending up with some violence and street protests. That discourse helped to foster a perception that attitudes and behaviours were developing a sharp political divide defined by acceptance or rejection of the Protocol. Some academic work has considered these issues. However, despite tensions and the setting of high rhetorical stakes there have not yet been sufficient wider effort to illuminate key attitudes to the Protocol. This survey aimed to address aspects of that lack of social attitude measurement and to determine if a sharp political divide exists.

Findings

This survey's findings mirror trends observed in recent elections (e.g. rise of the Alliance Party) and the significance of those who state that they are 'neither' in terms of identity preference. It also strengthens the argument that identities such as unionist and nationalist are not monolithic. We find some of those who wish for a united Ireland who oppose the EU's proposed mitigations, while some of those who wish to remain in the UK are supportive of the proposals.

- **Significantly, the findings also highlight high level inter-community consensus in NI:**
 - 58.6% of those who wish to remain in the UK and 56.9% who favour Irish unification stated that their immediate concerns were either Covid recovery, health or the economy.
 - The Protocol and constitutional issues sit behind everyday concerns and the desire for policy based approaches that have positive societal outcomes.
- **We also find levels of inter-community consensus that would suggest significant shares of respondents wish to see practical resolution and more frictionless goods movement:**
 - Regarding the EU's proposal on pharmaceuticals a mere 5.6% opposed. 71.9% of unionists, 80.7% of nationalists and 66.5% of neither agreed that this was a positive development
 - 7.2% disagreed with the UK government's proposal regarding the movement of goods with agreement sitting at 84.5% among unionists, 72.1% of nationalists and 65.3% neither.
- **We also find inter-community majorities regarding stability of the Northern Ireland**

Assembly:

- Regarding the Northern Ireland Assembly should decide by simple majority (Articles 5-10 of the Protocol) whether the Protocol should remain 52.6% of unionists, 67.7% of nationalists and 52.7% of those from the neither group agreed.
 - Regarding whether the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive should remain in place until the election in May 2022, 65% of respondents agreed compared to 9.6% who disagreed. A minority of DUP (12.8%) and UUP (6.7%) voters disagreed.
- **We find 54.9% acceptance of the EU's proposal on food, plant and animal health goods movement and 56.6% of the overall support for the package of mitigations announced by the EU in October 2021.**
 - We do not observe – among those who are Unionist - a majority favouring the EU's proposal on food etc. but 45.9% who are prepared to accept compared to 36.3% who stated the proposal was unacceptable.
 - Regarding the overall package of mitigations announced by the EU in October – among those who wish to remain in the UK – 39.0% agreed to accept and move on compared to 32.% who stated reject and renegotiate.

Consensus not crisis

This data evidences consensus or near consensus and not a crisis. It does not support the invocation of Article 16 due to societal difficulties. Instead, we find evidence of inter-community consensus, with consent achievable when negotiations/discussions explore - and more importantly - offer alternative practical resolutions.

This takes us back to the point that those who live in Northern Ireland seek outcomes presented by the EU and UK government that do not undermine the prioritisation of health, Covid recovery and the economy.

It is evident that respondents seek proportionality in North-South and East-West trade relationships. There is no evidence here of mass rejection, even among unionists, of the mitigations/easements advanced by the EU. Similarly, there is no nationalist/republican rejection of a key UK government proposal. This is not what is assumed within media and political commentary.

What the findings suggest is a willingness to compromise and build consensus. The capacity to advance mitigations/easement is reflective of the role civic society has played through engagement with the EU and the UK government. Civic society has operated as a buffer when tensions emerged and reacted with concerns about trade, economy and Covid recovery rather than constitutional crisis and related rhetoric.

Finding solutions, enacting opportunities

The data within this report supports more advanced forms of structured engagement that diffuses tensions through advancing and supporting participative democracy, evidenced debate and solution seeking. The findings that support a more consensual mood regarding the Protocol indicate the future role of civic and political leadership in a way that advances opportunities for economic growth and Covid recovery.

There are many investors, business leaders, trade unions, community groups and NGOs across Northern Ireland, GB and Ireland who are keen to develop potential trade, social economy and business opportunities offered by the Protocol. Such opportunities will sustain peace underpinned by shared prosperity, sustainable economic growth and the ability to meet the global challenges of environmental stability and security. Those opportunities will not be realised if we continually assess attitudes in Northern Ireland as unionist versus nationalist when in fact there is more consensus and thereby potential accord to be achievedⁱⁱ. **Complex issues cannot be reduced to sound bites, Tweets and headlines.**

Present negotiations and political actions must be outcome-driven. This data tells us that respondents seek both solution-seeking and solution-achievement. Critically, negotiations must get beyond the

bipolarity of UK and EU and other positions. The EU and UK must absorb the reality that tensions can be exacerbated or ameliorated based on their negotiations. As this data highlights we cannot remain in a discourse that simply highlights tensions but instead we should be mindful that despite evident difficulties the attitude among and within communities in Northern Ireland is to accept rather than to oppose and reject proposals. It could be assumed that the consensus measured within this data is indicative of movement from previous positions held by the UK government and EU.

The inter-community consensus located within this report is a point of renewal for ongoing mitigations, and confirmation that resolution will further develop that societal consensus and social cohesion.

Political and Constitutional Issues

Priorities and Issues

The Protocol is the 4th ranked issue in terms of 1st preference regarding priorities (**Tables 1 and 2**). The constitutional question remains low as a priority with health, Covid recovery and the economy as the 3 predominate issues. Only 9.6% of respondents agreed that the Assembly and Executive **should not** be in place come next year's elections.

- With regard to priorities and issues 59.8% chose Health, Covid Recovery and the Economy as their 1st preference. 9.1% chose the Protocol.
- Among those who wish to remain in the UK 12.6% stated the Protocol was the most important issue to them compared to 5.4% who wish for a united Ireland.
- 65% believed that it is imperative that the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive remain in place until the elections in May 2022. 62.2% of DUP voters agreed (**Table 3**).

Constitutional Issues

Constitutional issues remain bound up within Brexit and the Protocol. There continues to be significant support for remaining within the UK but that support is less obvious within younger age groups.

- Regarding constitutional preference, 58.6% of respondents support remaining in the UK compared to 29.8% who would vote tomorrow for a United Ireland (**Table 4**).
- When removing those who do not know or who would not vote in a border poll, the share who wish to remain in the UK rises to 66.2%.
- The highest share of support for remaining in the UK sits among those aged 60+ (74.6%) with similar shares among those aged 36-59 (55%) and those under 36 (54%) (**Table 5**).
- Females (12.5%) were nearly 3 times more likely than males (4.9%) to state that they did not know which way they would vote if a border poll was held tomorrow. 11.6% of the overall sample declared that they did not know how they would vote (**Table 6**).

Upcoming Elections

The fortunes of the DUP are not as meagre as assumed. However, they have lost a third of the votes they received in 2017 and 2019. With regards to those elections, Sinn Fein (SF), who at 23.0% are predicted as the largest party are down 4.4% since 2017. The SDLP and UUP remain roughly within the same share of intended first preferences (**Table 7**). There is projected growth for Alliance, TUV and the Greens compared to 2017 with Alliance doubling their vote. As Northern Irish society changes, the growth in number of those who state that they are 'neither' changes the understanding of identity but does not remove strong constitutional preferences within that identity preference.

Observed is a long-term drift from unionist parties by those who wish to remain in the UK. A significant share who are pro-Union intend to vote Alliance, abstain or are undecided concerning voting in 2022.

This fits in with previous research that concerned socially liberal pro-Union members of the electorate feeling that unionist political parties did not represent their values and commitments.

What we are observing, compared to 2017 is a static performance by the UUP and SDLP, some overall decline among unionist parties and the emergence of Alliance as the 3rd largest party in terms of voting intentions.

- The Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) remain the dominant unionist party at 20.6% with Sinn Fein ahead on 23.5%. The Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) and Traditional Unionist Voice (TUV) are on 13.0% and 5.6% respectively (**Table 7**).
- Despite a significant share wishing to remain in the UK only 39.2% stated that they will vote DUP, Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) or Traditional Unionist Voice (TUV) (**Table 7/8**).
- A third of the sample stated that they were ‘neither’, and of these 67.8%ⁱⁱⁱ support remaining in the UK. Within that group 94.3% stated that they had not decided/would not vote or that they would not be voting DUP, UUP or TUV in next year’s Assembly election (**Table 9**).
- The Alliance Party on 17.3% are 8.2% above the share of first preference votes they received in the 2017 Assembly election and on a par with their Westminster election performance in 2019. The TUV have grown from 3.4% in 2017 to 5.6%.
- The share who wish for a united Ireland is equivalent to 92.9% of those intending to vote SF or SDLP. In comparison among those who wish to remain in UK 52.3% intend to vote DUP, UUP and TUV. It is evident that constitutional preference for those wishing to remain in the UK does not equate strongly with regard to voting for unionist parties.

Political Performance and the Protocol

Measuring negotiating in good faith, the handling of disputes and political party performance regarding the Protocol, fell within predictable lines. Unionists are more likely to agree that the UK government and related political parties had done well, Nationalists agree that the Irish government, the EU and parties they support had achieved good faith and political handling. In no case did any political party, the UK or Irish government or EU gain majority support.

- With regard to whether the business community has shown leadership, 45.1% agreed (**Graph 1**)
- In terms of negotiating in good faith 37.8% agreed this had been shown by the EU compared to 32.0% for the UK government (**Graphs 2 and 3**)
- In terms of handling disputes that had arisen 23.6% stated that the UK had done well compared to 35.3% regarding the Irish government and 38.0% the EU (**Graph 4**)
- Regarding the performance of political parties the Alliance Party (45.2%) and the SDLP (44.8%) were the top performers with the DUP recording the lowest ranked performance at 26.7% (**Graph 5**)

Mitigations and Solutions

The issues around the Protocol have caused tension and controversy but more recently, mitigations/easements have been advanced as well as proposals from the UK government. With regard to EU proposals, we locate majority support with strongest support among SF and SDLP voters. Within all communities, we observe significant shares who do not know or neither agree or disagree but generally, we find agreement higher than disagreement across unionist, nationalist and neither.

Among those who state they are unionist and among DUP voters, in particular, we find both small (SPS) and larger majorities (pharmaceuticals) regarding EU proposals. **There is no overall rejection by unionists of these two specific mitigations.**

Regarding whether the mitigations announced by the European Union (EU) are enough to allow all parties to move forward, 36% of DUP and 30.8% UUP voters agreed compared to 28.1% and 29.8% who respectively disagreed. Similarly, with regard to the mitigations announced on 13th October by the EU, 39% of those who wish to remain in the UK agreed to accept and move on compared to 32.5% who wish to reject and renegotiate. **Evidently, there is no majority support within the pro-union community to reject mitigations and easements, or to reject the process of solution seeking moving forward.**

The UK government's proposal that goods should be able to circulate without checks on their movement into and within Northern Ireland if they meet either UK or EU standards achieved 74.7% endorsement with strong support from across unionism, nationalism and neither.

What the data suggests is that ongoing solution seeking gains inter-community consent and the idea that the pro-union are set against the mitigations is not as grounded as has been claimed.

- With regard to the EU proposal regarding food, plant and animal health (i.e. 'SPS') 54.9% were in support. Half as many (24.2%) disagreed and a fifth (20.9%) stated they did not know (**Table 10**).
- When examined by identity, and removing those who stated they neither agreed/disagreed or did not know, 55.7% of unionist agreed compared to 85.7% of nationalists and 72.1% of neither (**Table 11**).
- Concerning the UK proposal that goods should circulate without checks on their movement into and within Northern Ireland if they meet either UK or EU standards, a significant 74.7% agreed. 13.4% neither agreed or disagreed, less than 10% (7.2%) disagreed with 4.7% stating they did not know (**Table 12**).
- 69.5% of SF and 72.5% of SDLP voters agreed with the UK government's proposal. This is similar to the University of Liverpool General election survey in which inter-community support was high for no checks on goods moving from Northern Ireland to Ireland and between GB and Northern Ireland.
- The EU's proposals regarding medicines in which pharmaceutical companies in GB could continue to supply the Northern Irish market also received significant support at 72.4%. Interestingly, 62.2% of TUV voters agreed (**Table 14**).
- Respondents were asked if the mitigations announced by the European Union (EU) are enough to allow all parties to move forward. Again, we find higher support among SDLP, SF and Alliance supporters. However, the largest share of DUP voters at 36% agreed (**Table 15**).
- Respondents were asked if the mitigations announced on 13th October by the EU should be accepted or rejected. Twice as many (42.2%) stated accept and move forward compared to 20.7% who wished for rejection and renegotiation. Slightly more (26.0%) stated that they did not know compared to those who urged rejection. When excluding those who did not know 54.5% of those who wish to remain in the UK agreed to move forward (**Table 16**).
- There was also majority support (56.7%) - nearly 4 times greater than disagreement (15.8%) - affirming that the Northern Ireland Assembly should decide by simple majority whether the Protocol should remain. This included majority support from DUP (71.5%), UUP (66.6%) and TUV (56%) voters (**Table 17**).

Section 1: Priorities, Voting and Constitutional Issues

Table 1: What, in order, are the 2 most important issues that concern you at present (Sample)?

| | Most important issue | 2 nd most important issue |
|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Health | 29.1 | 15.6 |
| Covid Recovery | 18.3 | 15.9 |
| Economy | 12.4 | 15.9 |
| The Protocol | 9.1 | 10.9 |
| Employment | 5.4 | 6.5 |
| Education | 4.7 | 8.0 |
| Environment | 4.7 | 6.1 |
| Housing | 4.4 | 6.0 |
| Equality | 4.2 | 5.1 |
| Crime | 3.8 | 4.4 |
| Immigration | 1.7 | 2.2 |
| Constitutional Issues | 1.4 | 3.2 |
| Other (Please specify) | 0.9 | 0.4 |

Table 2: What, in order, is the most important issue? (Constitutional Preference)

| | Remain in UK | United Ireland | Undecided | Would Not Vote |
|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------|----------------|
| Health | 28.4 | 29.1 | 39.6 | 6.6 |
| Covid Recovery | 18.4 | 13.4 | 20.0 | 53.6 |
| Economy | 11.8 | 14.4 | 8.8 | 16.0 |
| The Protocol | 12.6 | 5.4 | 1.1 | 0.0 |
| Employment | 3.9 | 7.7 | 7.7 | 7.7 |
| Education | 3.4 | 7.0 | 4.4 | 4.4 |
| Environment | 4.8 | 4.3 | 6.6 | 6.6 |
| Housing | 4.3 | 4.7 | 4.4 | 4.0 |
| Equality | 4.1 | 5.4 | 2.2 | 0.0 |
| Crime | 3.4 | 5.7 | 2.1 | 0.0 |
| Immigration | 2.7 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Constitutional Issues | 1.2 | 2.0 | 1.1 | 0.0 |
| Other | 1.0 | 0.7 | 1.1 | 1.1 |

Table 3: It is imperative that the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive remain in place until the elections in May 2022

| | Strongly Agree/ Agree | Neither Agree/ Disagree | Strongly Disagree/ Disagree | Do Not Know | Strongly Agree/Agree (Excluding Do Not Know/Neither) |
|-----------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|--|
| DUP | 62.2 | 19.5 | 12.8 | 5.5 | 82.9 |
| SF | 75.9 | 10.7 | 10.8 | 2.7 | 87.6 |
| SDLP | 76.9 | 11.0 | 11.0 | 1.1 | 87.5 |
| UUP | 71.2 | 20.2 | 6.7 | 1.9 | 91.3 |
| Alliance | 73.9 | 16.7 | 3.6 | 5.8 | 95.4 |
| TUV | 48.9 | 13.3 | 35.5 | 2.2 | 57.8 |
| Green | 48.4 | 35.5 | 9.7 | 6.5 | 80.6 |
| Undecided | 53.8 | 23.8 | 6.2 | 16.2 | 89.7 |

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| Not Voting | 42.3 | 35.9 | 7.6 | 14.1 | 84.8 |
| Sample Average^{iv} | 65.0 | 19.3 | 9.6 | 6.2 | 87.1 |

Table 4: If there was a border poll tomorrow, would you vote for Northern Ireland to stay as part of the United Kingdom or for a United Ireland? (Voting Intention)

| | Remain in UK | United Ireland | Do Not Know | Would Not vote | Remain in UK (Excluding Do Not Know/Would Not Vote) |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--|
| DUP | 96.3 | 3.7 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 96.3 |
| SF | 9.6 | 86.6 | 3.2 | 0.5 | 11.1 |
| SDLP | 29.7 | 51.6 | 17.6 | 1.1 | 36.4 |
| UUP | 96.2 | 2.9 | 1.0 | 0.0 | 97.0 |
| Alliance Party | 60.9 | 16.7 | 22.5 | 0.0 | 78.5 |
| TUV | 97.8 | 0.0 | 2.2 | 0.0 | 100 |
| Green | 45.2 | 32.3 | 16.1 | 6.5 | 58.3 |
| Undecided | 64.6 | 16.9 | 15.4 | 3.1 | 79.2 |
| Not Voting | 51.3 | 17.9 | 11.5 | 19.2 | 74.0 |
| Sample Average | 58.6 | 29.8 | 9.1 | 2.5 | 66.2 |

Table 5: If there was a border poll tomorrow, would you vote for Northern Ireland to stay as part of the United Kingdom or for a United Ireland? (Age)

| | Remain in UK | United Ireland | Do Not Know | Would Not Vote |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Under 35 | 54.0 | 34.7 | 9.2 | 2.1 |
| 36-59 | 55.0 | 31.0 | 11.2 | 2.8 |
| 60+ | 74.6 | 18.9 | 4.0 | 2.5 |
| Average | 58.6 | 29.8 | 9.1 | 2.5 |
| Weighted by Religion | | | | |
| | 55.2 | 32.9 | 9.3 | 2.3 |

Table 6: If there was a border poll tomorrow, would you vote for Northern Ireland to stay as part of the United Kingdom or for a United Ireland? (Identity and Gender)

| | Remain UK | United Ireland | Do Not Know | Would not Vote |
|---------------|------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Unionist | 93.2 | 4.0 | 2.5 | 0.3 |
| Nationalist | 14.9 | 74.3 | 10.4 | 0.4 |
| Neither | 52.4 | 24.9 | 15.9 | 6.9 |
| Gender | | | | |
| Male | 59.7 | 32.5 | 4.9 | 2.9 |
| Female | 57.5 | 27.8 | 12.5 | 2.2 |

Table 7: Which party will you give your 1st preference vote to in the next Northern Ireland Assembly election (Excluding Undecided/Will not Vote)?

| | % Share Survey | 2017 Assembly Vote | % Change | 2019 Westminster Vote | % Change |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|------|------|------|---------------|-------|
| SF | 23.5 | 27.9 | -4.4 | 22.7 | +0.7 |
| DUP | 20.6 | 28.1 | -7.5 | 30.6 | -10.0 |
| Alliance Party | 17.3 | 9.1 | +8.2 | 16.7 | +0.5 |
| UUP | 13.0 | 12.9 | +0.1 | 11.7 | +1.3 |
| SDLP | 11.4 | 11.9 | -0.5 | 14.9 | -3.5 |
| TUV | 5.6 | 2.6 | +3.0 | Did Not Stand | NA |
| Other | 4.7 | 4.8 | -0.1 | 3.0 | +1.7 |
| Green | 3.9 | 2.7 | +1.2 | 0.2 | +3.7 |
| Weighted by Religion | | | | | |
| SF | 24.2 | 27.9 | -3.7 | 22.7 | +1.5 |
| DUP | 18.7 | 28.1 | -9.4 | 30.6 | -11.9 |
| Alliance | 16.2 | 9.1 | +7.1 | 16.7 | -0.5 |
| UUP | 11.4 | 12.9 | -1.5 | 11.7 | -0.3 |
| SDLP | 12.2 | 11.9 | +0.3 | 14.9 | +2.7 |
| TUV | 4.7 | 2.6 | +2.1 | Did Not Stand | |

Table 8: Which party will you give your 1st preference vote to in the next Northern Ireland Assembly election (Excluding Undecided/Will not Vote)? (Identity)

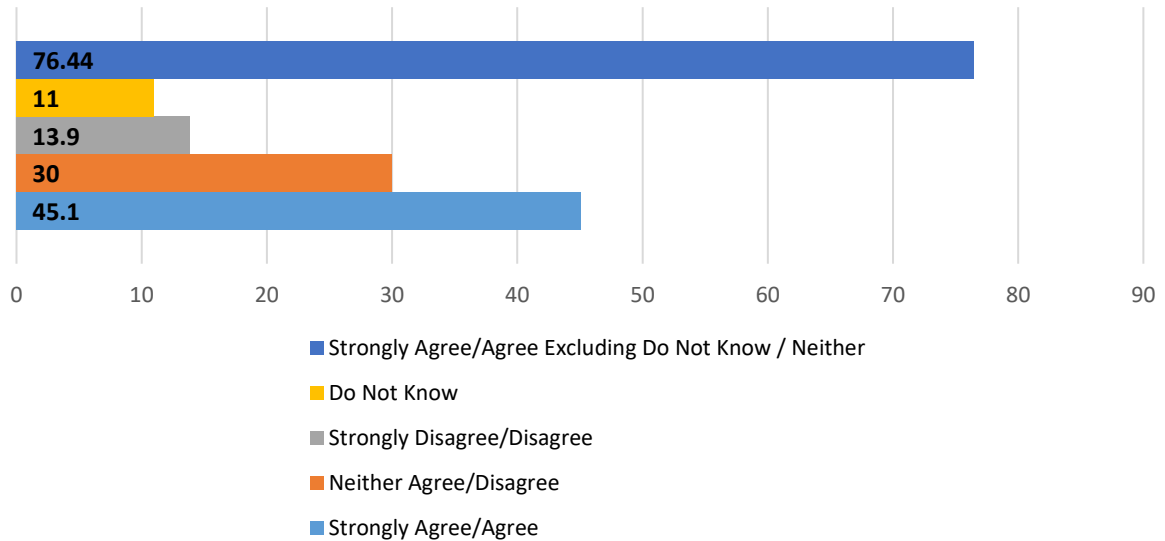
| | DUP | SF | SDLP | UUP | Alliance | TUV | Undecided | Not Voting |
|-----------------------------|------|------|------|------|----------|------|-----------|------------|
| Unionist | 37.3 | 1.5 | 2.0 | 23.6 | 9.5 | 10.0 | 10.0 | 2.0 |
| Nationalist | 2.2 | 49.1 | 19.7 | 1.1 | 8.6 | 0.4 | 7.1 | 4.5 |
| Neither | 2.7 | 14.7 | 9.0 | 2.1 | 23.1 | 1.2 | 21.3 | 17.4 |
| Weighted by Religion | | | | | | | | |
| Unionist | 37.0 | | | | | | | |
| Nationalist | 30.5 | | | | | | | |
| Neither | 32.3 | | | | | | | |

Table 9: Which party will you give your 1st preference vote to in the next Northern Ireland Assembly election (Constitutional Preference)?

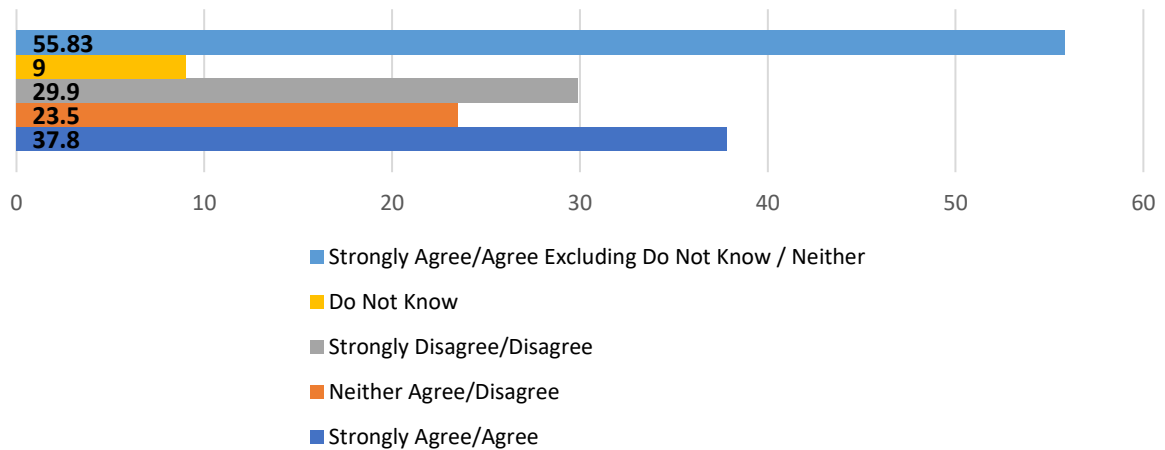
| | DUP,UUP, TUV | SF/SDLP | Alliance | Undecided | Remain in Union ^v | % share voting DUP, UUP, TUV and who support remaining in UK |
|--------------------|--------------|---------|----------|-----------|------------------------------|--|
| Neither | 6.0 | 23.7 | 23.0 | 21.3 | 67.8 | 5.7 |
| Unionist | 70.9 | 3.5 | 9.5 | 10.0 | 95.8 | 76.0 |
| Nationalist | 3.7 | 68.8 | 8.6 | 7.1 | 16.6 | 3.2 |

Section 2: Political Performance and the Protocol

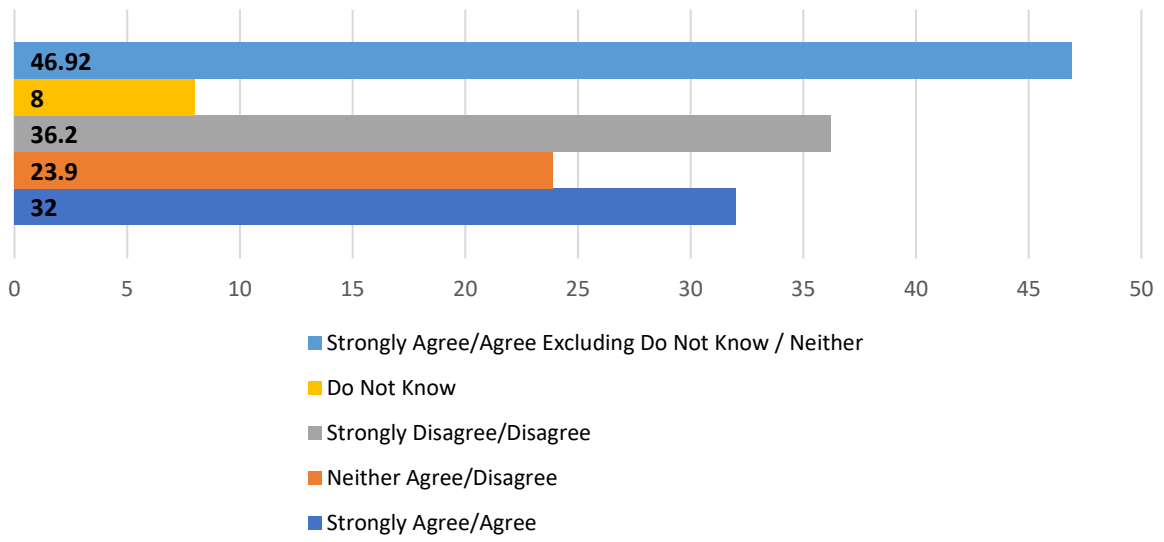
Graph 1: The business community in N Ireland has shown leadership in terms of ideas and solutions to resolve evident tensions with the Protocol



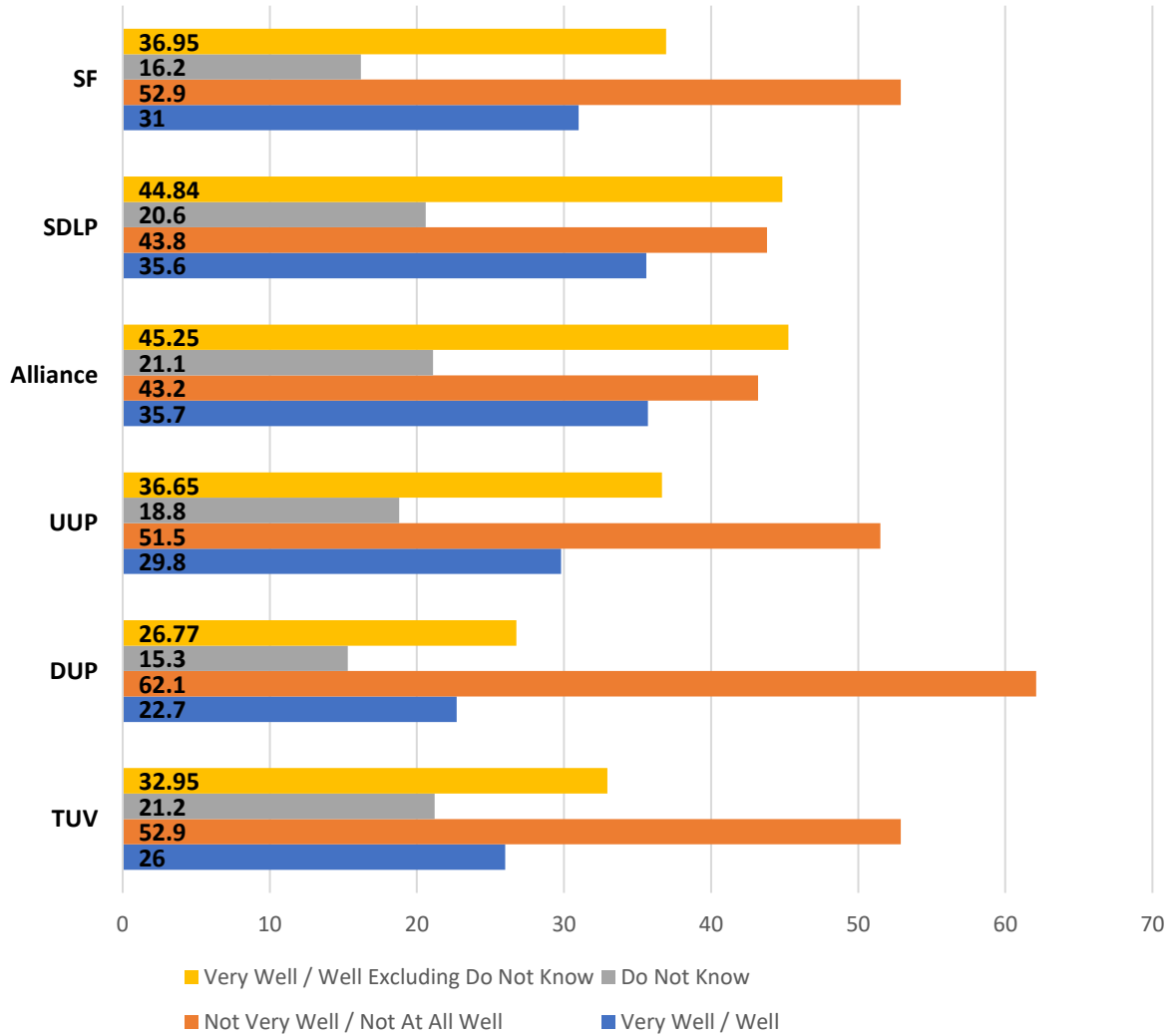
Graph 2: With respect to the NI Protocol, the EU has been negotiating in good faith



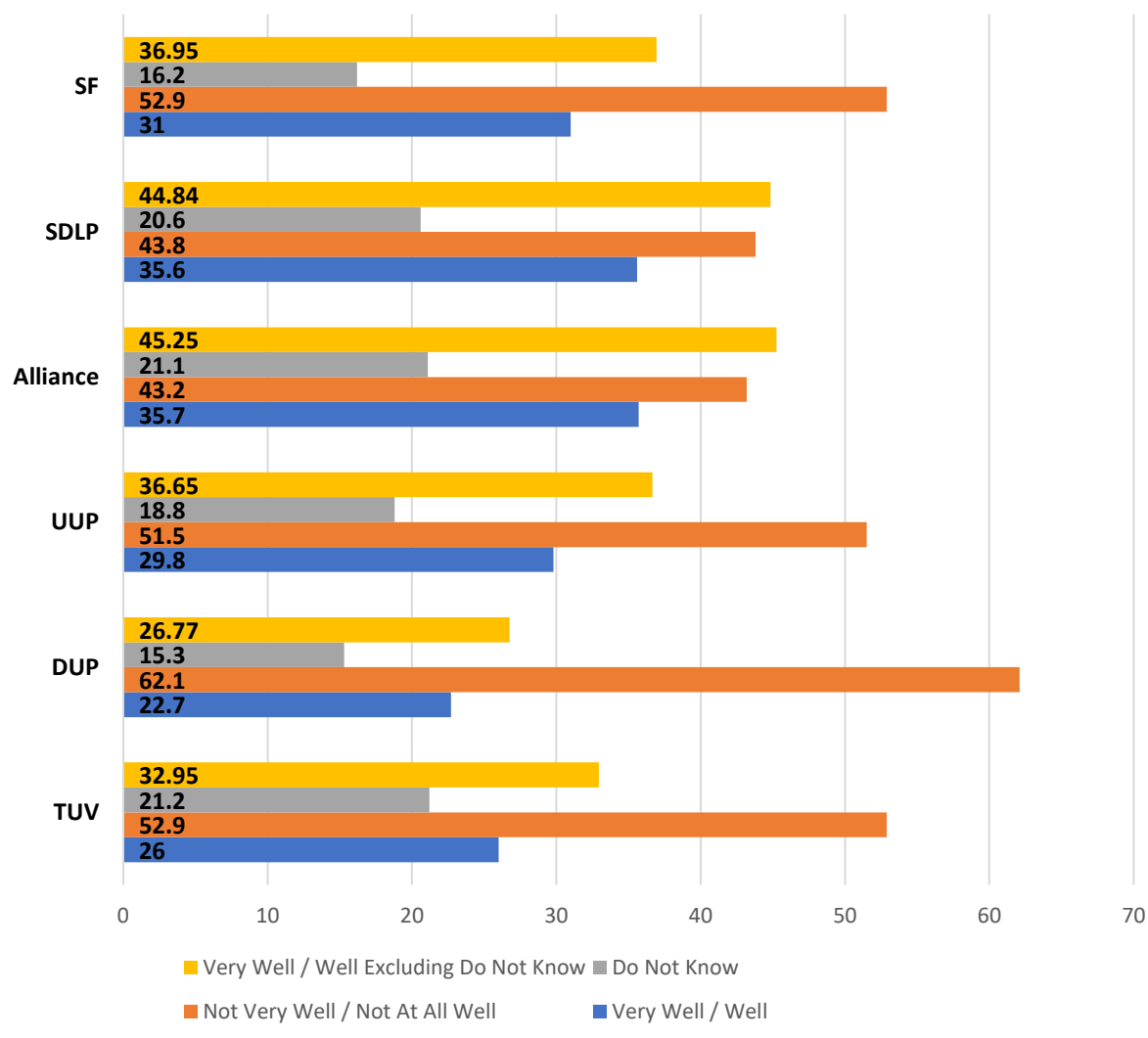
Graph 3: With respect to the NI Protocol, the UK Government has been negotiating in good faith



Graph 5: How do you feel each of the following has handled the dispute around the NI Protocol?



Graph 5: How do you feel each of the following has handled the dispute around the NI Protocol?



Section 3: Mitigation/Solutions

Table 10: The EU has proposed a solution regarding food, plant and animal health (i.e. ‘SPS’) that will lead to a reduction (approximated at 80%) of checks for a wide range of goods moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland. This proposal is...?

| | Acceptable | Unacceptable | Do Not Know | Acceptable (Excluding Do Not Know) |
|----------------|------------|--------------|-------------|------------------------------------|
| DUP | 40.2 | 36.6 | 23.2 | 52.3 |
| SF | 71.7 | 13.4 | 15.0 | 84.2 |
| SDLP | 75.8 | 15.4 | 8.8 | 83.1 |
| UUP | 41.3 | 42.3 | 16.3 | 49.4 |
| Alliance Party | 67.4 | 14.5 | 18.1 | 82.3 |
| TUV | 26.7 | 62.2 | 11.1 | 30.0 |
| Green | 67.7 | 12.9 | 19.4 | 84.0 |
| Undecided | 45.4 | 22.3 | 32.3 | 67.0 |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Not Voting | 44.9 | 12.8 | 42.3 | 77.7 |
| Identity | | | | |
| Unionist | 45.9 | 36.3 | 17.8 | 55.7 |
| Nationalist | 76.2 | 12.6 | 11.2 | 85.7 |
| Neither | 48.8 | 18.9 | 32.3 | 72.1 |
| Sample Average | 54.9 | 24.2 | 20.9 | 69.4 |

Table 11: The EU has proposed a solution regarding food, plant and animal health (i.e ‘SPS’) that will lead to a reduction (approximated at 80%) of checks for a wide range of goods moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland. This proposal is...? (Age, Gender and Constitutional Preference)

| | Acceptable | Unacceptable | Do Not Know | Acceptable (Excluding Do Not Know) |
|-----------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|------------------------------------|
| Age | | | | |
| Under 34 | 50.7 | 23.4 | 25.8 | 68.4 |
| 35-59 | 60.6 | 18.5 | 20.9 | 76.5 |
| 60+ | 49.3 | 38.3 | 12.4 | 56.2 |
| Gender | | | | |
| Men | 59.5 | 28.5 | 11.9 | 67.5 |
| Women | 51.3 | 20.7 | 28.0 | 71.2 |
| Constitutional | | | | |
| Remain UK | 46.7 | 32.2 | 21.1 | 59.1 |
| United Ireland | 72.9 | 13.0 | 14.0 | 84.8 |

Table 12: Goods should be able to circulate without checks on their movement into and within Northern Ireland if they meet either UK or EU standards

| | Strongly Agree/ Agree | Neither Agree/ Disagree | Strongly Disagree/ Disagree | Do Not Know | Strongly Agree/Agree (Excluding Do Not Know/Neither) |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|--|
| DUP | 79.9 | 11.6 | 5.5 | 2.4 | 92.9 |
| SF | 69.5 | 19.8 | 8.6 | 2.1 | 89.0 |
| SDLP | 72.5 | 13.2 | 13.0 | 1.1 | 75.0 |
| UUP | 87.5 | 6.7 | 5.8 | 0.0 | 93.8 |
| Alliance | 78.3 | 14.5 | 4.4 | 2.9 | 94.7 |
| TUV | 91.1 | 2.2 | 6.6 | 0.0 | 93.1 |
| Green | 67.7 | 16.1 | 9.7 | 6.5 | 87.5 |
| Undecided | 63.8 | 13.8 | 8.5 | 13.8 | 88.2 |
| Not Voting | 61.5 | 17.9 | 5.2 | 15.4 | 92.3 |
| Identity | | | | | |
| Unionist | 84.5 | 7.5 | 5.0 | 3.0 | 94.3 |
| Nationalist | 72.1 | 15.2 | 10.4 | 2.2 | 87.3 |
| Neither | 65.3 | 18.9 | 7.2 | 8.7 | 90.0 |
| Sample Average | 74.7 | 13.4 | 7.2 | 4.7 | 91.2 |

Table 13: Goods should be able to circulate without checks on their movement into and within Northern Ireland if they meet either UK or EU standards

| | Strongly Agree/Agree | Neither Agree/Disagree | Strongly Disagree/Disagree | Do Not Know | Strongly Agree/Agree (Excluding Do Not Know/Disagree) |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| Age | | | | | |
| Under 34 | 62.6 | 18.7 | 12.2 | 6.5 | 83.7 |
| 35-59 | 76.7 | 12.5 | 5.8 | 5.0 | 92.9 |
| 60+ | 90.5 | 6.5 | 2.0 | 1.0 | 97.8 |
| Gender | | | | | |
| Men | 79.4 | 12.4 | 5.9 | 2.2 | 93.0 |
| Women | 70.9 | 14.3 | 8.1 | 6.8 | 89.7 |

Table 14: The EU's proposals regarding medicines in which pharmaceutical companies in Great Britain can continue to supply the Northern Irish market is a positive development.

| | Strongly Agree/Agree | Neither Agree/Disagree | Strongly Disagree/Disagree | Do Not Know | Strongly Agree/Disagree Agree (Excluding Do Not Know/Neither) |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| DUP | 67.1 | 20.7 | 6.7 | 5.5 | 91.7 |
| SF | 81.3 | 13.9 | 2.7 | 2.1 | 96.8 |
| SDLP | 78.1 | 11.0 | 8.8 | 2.2 | 91.0 |
| UUP | 75.0 | 14.4 | 5.7 | 4.8 | 92.8 |
| Alliance | 81.9 | 8.0 | 2.9 | 7.2 | 96.5 |
| TUV | 62.2 | 17.8 | 17.7 | 2.2 | 77.7 |
| Green | 71.0 | 16.1 | 0.0 | 12.9 | 100 |
| Undecided | 61.5 | 16.2 | 6.1 | 16.2 | 90.9 |
| Not Voting | 55.1 | 24.4 | 5.1 | 15.4 | 91.4 |
| Identity | | | | | |
| Unionist | 71.9 | 15.0 | 6.5 | 6.5 | 92.6 |
| Nationalist | 80.7 | 11.9 | 4.1 | 3.3 | 95.7 |
| Neither | 66.5 | 17.4 | 5.7 | 10.5 | 96.1 |
| Sample Average | 72.4 | 15.0 | 5.6 | 7.0 | 92.8 |

Table 15: The mitigations announced by the European Union (EU) are enough to allow all parties to move forward

| | Strongly Agree/Agree | Neither Agree/Disagree | Strongly Disagree/Disagree | Do Not Know | Strongly Agree/Agree (Excluding Do Not Know/Neither) |
|------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| DUP | 36.0 | 29.3 | 28.1 | 6.7 | 56.2 |
| SF | 62.0 | 25.1 | 9.1 | 3.7 | 87.2 |
| SDLP | 53.8 | 17.6 | 22.0 | 6.6 | 71.0 |

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| UUP | 30.8 | 31.7 | 29.8 | 7.7 | 50.7 |
| Alliance Party | 55.8 | 21.7 | 13.1 | 9.4 | 81.0 |
| TUV | 24.4 | 20.0 | 53.3 | 2.2 | 31.4 |
| Green | 45.2 | 32.3 | 12.9 | 9.7 | 77.7 |
| Undecided | 23.8 | 30.8 | 16.2 | 29.2 | 59.6 |
| Not Voting | 25.6 | 28.2 | 20.5 | 25.6 | 55.5 |
| Sample Average | 42.2 | 26.0 | 20.7 | 11.2 | 70.2 |

Table 16: With regard to the mitigations announced on the 13th October by the EU we should...? (Constitutional Preference/SEG)

| | Accept and Move Forward | Reject and renegotiate | Do Not Know | Accept and Move Forward (Excluding Do Not Know) |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------|---|
| Remain in the UK | 39.0 | 32.5 | 28.4 | 54.5 |
| United Ireland | 73.2 | 11.4 | 15.4 | 86.5 |
| Do Not Know | 58.2 | 11.0 | 30.8 | 84.1 |
| Would not Vote | 16.0 | 4.0 | 80.0 | 80.0 |
| By Socio-Economic Group | | | | |
| ABC1 | 54.5 | 26.6 | 18.9 | 67.2 |
| C2DE | 45.9 | 20.3 | 33.8 | 69.4 |
| Sample Average | 50.4 | 23.6 | 26.0 | 68.1 |

Table 17: The Northern Ireland Assembly should decide by simple majority whether the Protocol should remain

| | Strongly Agree/ Agree | Neither Agree/ Disagree | Strongly Disagree/ Disagree | Do Not Know | Strongly Agree/ Agree (Excluding Do Not Know/Neither) |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|---|
| DUP | 50.0 | 23.8 | 20.1 | 5.5 | 71.5 |
| SF | 72.7 | 15.5 | 6.9 | 4.8 | 91.2 |
| SDLP | 65.9 | 14.3 | 16.5 | 3.3 | 80.0 |
| UUP | 53.8 | 18.3 | 26.9 | 1.0 | 66.6 |
| Alliance Party | 60.9 | 20.3 | 7.2 | 11.6 | 89.3 |
| TUV | 51.1 | 2.2 | 40.0 | 6.7 | 56.0 |
| Green | 51.6 | 12.9 | 22.6 | 12.9 | 69.5 |
| Undecided | 42.9 | 26.2 | 14.7 | 16.2 | 74.2 |
| Not Voting | 46.2 | 26.9 | 9.0 | 17.9 | 83.7 |
| Identity | | | | | |
| Unionist | 52.6 | 19.8 | 21.3 | 6.3 | 71.1 |
| Nationalist | 67.7 | 15.2 | 13.0 | 4.1 | 80.1 |
| Neither | 52.7 | 21.3 | 11.4 | 14.7 | 82.2 |
| Sample Average | 56.6 | 19.0 | 15.8 | 8.5 | 78.2 |

ⁱ In October 2021, the University of Liverpool commissioned Social Market Research (SMR) to undertake a survey among a representative sample of Northern Ireland adults on issues associated with the Northern Ireland Protocol.

1.1 Survey Focus and Content

Survey content focused on the following:

- Most important issue in N Ireland
- Acceptability of recent EU announced mitigations in relation to the NI Protocol
- General opinion on the NI Protocol
- Perception of how different groups handled the dispute around the NI Protocol
- Support for NI remaining part of the UK / Irish unity
- Voting intention
- Demographic characteristics

1.2 Survey Methodology

The research was conducted in line with ISO20252 of which Social Market Research (SMR) is fully accredited. The survey is based on 1002 interviews with Northern Ireland adults aged 16+. The survey has a margin of error of +/- 3.1%. Interviews were conducted using an online panel methodology with quotas set for: age; gender; SEG; and, area of residence. Survey fieldwork was conducted between 21st and 29th of October.

All members of the panel have registered through the double opt-in method i.e. each panel member signs up to the panel with an email then forwarded asking them to confirm and consent to their participation as a panel member. As well as using double opt in, the panel recruits members via a range of different affiliate websites. Using a variety of sources to populate the panel ensures good representation across key segments (e.g. age, gender, SEG and area of residence).

The analysis was weighted by these segments. It was noted that additional analysis with weighting by religion would be undertaken week beginning 15th November 2021. That analysis showed that when religion is weighted the share who support remaining in the UK is 55.3% and for Irish unity 32.9%. The share who stated that they are neither declined by 1%, nationalist +3.1% higher and unionist -3.4% lower. It was hoped that the evidence presented on the Protocol and the UK government proposal would form the initial talking points.

ⁱⁱ See <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/humanities-and-social-sciences/research/research-themes/transforming-conflict/ni-election-survey-19/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Excluding 'do not knows' and 'will not vote.'

^{iv} The sample averages of the averages of subsets is not the same as the average of the whole set. It will only be the same value if the subsets are the same sample size.

^v This excludes those who stated they did not know or would not vote in a Border Poll.