Project Blueprint

Winning a Conservative majority in 2015

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The coalition that matters

FOLLOWING DAVID CAMERON'S first anniversary as Prime Minister, comment has been dominated by the state of the coalition government: the dynamics of the two-party partnership, relations between senior figures in the aftermath of local elections and the referendum, the likely implications of grumpiness among Liberal Democrat ministers. To me, those things are secondary – intriguing, but transitory. Worse, they are of interest mainly to those who play the game of politics or write about it. I am more interested in the people who make their living outside Westminster.

What matters to me is not so much the coalition between the parties, but how to create the coalition of voters who will elect a Conservative government with an overall majority at the next general election.

As I concluded in *Minority Verdict*, my review of the 2010 campaign, David Cameron's decision to form a coalition with the Liberal Democrats was the right one in the circumstances. As well as offering strong and stable government for the country, it gave the Conservative Party a chance to show still sceptical voters that it could be trusted to govern. In doing so, the Tories could complete the job of rebuilding support to a level where they could win outright.

Doing so will be tough. As the May local elections showed, Conservative support is holding up fairly well – quite an achievement given the action the government is taking on the deficit. But unlike most previous parties of government, today's Tories must do more than just keep the voters that put them in power. We should be aiming to move beyond our 2010 share of 37 per cent to a level above 40 per cent that is usually needed for outright victory. Viewed from this perspective, the fact that the Conservatives are just about holding their own offers limited comfort.

The Conservative Party has always been a coalition, comprising voters with different attitudes and priorities. This was the case when the party attracted less than a third of the country's votes, just as it was in 2010. Expanding the Conservative voting coalition to the point where it will elect a majority Conservative government is a strategic challenge for Mr Cameron. First, he must hold together those who voted in 2010. These included first-time Tories voting against Gordon Brown's Labour, who were still not sure the Conservatives were really on their side or were concerned about the party's approach to public services, as well as loyal Tories who may since have become frustrated by some of the compromises of two-party government.

Just as important, he must attract new voters in substantial numbers. Many of these will come from the ranks of those who considered the Tories in 2010 but thought better of it. Their fears were the same as those of first-time Conservative voters, but more deeply rooted. Winning them over means changing the perceptions that have led these voters to believe for many years, and sometimes their whole lives, that the

Conservatives are not for people like them – and doing so at a time of economic uncertainty and "Tory cuts".

On the other side of the equation, while the Conservatives struggle to piece together two fifths of the electorate, Labour's core support plus left-leaning former Lib Dems could theoretically give Ed Miliband close to 40 per cent of the vote without needing to get out of bed.

The purpose of this study is to provide some signposts to help the Conservatives through their strategic conundrum. My research has looked in detail at those who voted Conservative in 2010, and those who thought about doing so but decided not to (the group from whom most new supporters will have to be drawn). In addition, polling of more than 10,000 adults has helped define and quantify the elements of the potential Conservative voting coalition, and to isolate the issues or perceptions that drive the voting intentions of different voter groups. I wanted to work out what they have in common, where they differ, and whether attracting one element of the potential coalition would necessarily repel another. Some may think the government is a bit too Tory, and others think it is not Tory enough: can both be persuaded to vote for David Cameron in four years' time?

Much of the comment from Conservatives expresses frustration that the government has not pursued as robust a Conservative agenda as they would like, and concern that disappointed Tory voters will take their business elsewhere. No doubt this may happen in some cases. But my research found that those who voted Conservative in 2010 were, by and large, pretty satisfied with how things are going. Nearly nine out of ten of them thought the right decisions were being made on the economy and three quarters supported the cuts. They were more likely to say their view of the party had improved since the election than to say it was worse. They understood the inevitability of compromise in a coalition government and, if they disliked it, usually thought the answer was to get a Conservative majority next time, not to vote for smaller parties which can make trenchant pronouncements on all issues without the prospect of office.

In fact, the most vulnerable Conservatives are not longstanding supporters, but those who voted for the party for the first time in 2010. The main motivation for these first-time Tories was the desire to get rid of Labour, so their view of the Conservatives was not necessarily very positive to start with. The research found them much more likely than Conservative voters as a whole to say the coalition was doing worse than they had expected, and also much more likely to say they saw the coalition as essentially a Conservative government with some Lib Dem window dressing. Though a majority thought the cuts necessary and unavoidable, they were twice as likely as Tories generally to say they were too deep and too quick. First-timers whose view of the party had changed for the better since the election were all but matched by those who said it had worsened. The proportion wanting to see an outright Conservative victory next time, though still a majority, was lower than among Conservative voters as a whole. Only just over half said they would probably

vote for the party in 2015 (though a very high proportion said they didn't know), well below the level for Conservative voters overall.

The research also found a gender gap. Women were consistently and significantly less enthusiastic about the Conservative Party and the government's performance, and more concerned about the cuts, than men.

Not surprisingly, those who considered voting Conservative in 2010 but decided not to do so were less sanguine than Tory voters about the government and its decisions. The biggest barrier, which was not overcome by election day and remains in place for most of them, is the perception (which Tories are sick of hearing about but is real nonetheless) that the Conservative Party is for the rich, not for people like them. As with Conservative voters, Considerers who had never voted Tory were more negative in their views than those who had done so in the past.

That is not to say their minds are closed. A fair chunk of them said the coalition government was doing better than they had expected, most thought the right decisions were being made on the economy and that things will have improved in three or four years, and around half of them supported the government on deficit reduction. They rated the Conservatives well ahead of the other parties on hard measures like being willing to take tough decisions for the long term, being competent and capable, and doing what they say they will do – though behind on softer measures like standing for fairness or equal opportunity. They were as likely to say their view of the Conservatives had changed for the better (most often because they thought the party in government was doing what it promised, particularly in sticking to tough decisions on the deficit, and they were impressed with David Cameron) as to say it had changed for the worse. Nearly a third said the performance of David Cameron and the Tories in government had made them more likely to consider voting for them at the next election. Unlike Conservative voters, though, most said they would much prefer the present coalition to a Conservative government with an overall majority – potentially an important obstacle to them voting Conservative at the election if an outright Tory victory looks like a real prospect.

Those prepared to hazard which party they would probably end up voting for in 2015 divided evenly in our poll between the Conservatives, Labour and the Liberal Democrats – but the qualitative research found them deeply unconvinced by Ed Miliband and Labour, and often scathing about their kneejerk opposition and refusal to offer an alternative to the government's deficit reduction plans. These voters are very far from being in the bag for any party, but most are prepared to give the coalition at least a couple of years before they start to make up their minds.

Some Tories are suspicious of any talk of reaching out to new voters, as though this necessarily implies a string of PR gimmicks and the abandonment of all principle. It does not mean any such thing, of course. But the need for new supporters is a mathematical fact – we will not be able to implement a Conservative manifesto in full unless we get a bigger share of the vote than we did last time. Inescapably, that

means attracting voters who could not bring themselves to vote Conservative in 2010. Equally inescapably, this means continuing to overcome the brand negatives that have held us back. David Cameron made progress on this score in the last parliament, but the deep-seated belief remains among many uncommitted but so far un-Conservative voters that the party is not for people like them. As a result, the new territory the party conquered was limited: at the 2010 election, 83 per cent of those who voted Conservative had done so before.

There are lessons to be drawn from voters' impressions of the way the government is handling the main areas of policy. Our research suggests that welfare reform is a striking political success story for the Conservatives. Public demand for changes to the welfare system has been clear for years, and certainly not just among Tories. We found that people grasped and strongly supported specific elements of the government's plans, such as ensuring that people are better off in work than on benefits, and they recognised that these plans are being implemented. In our segmentation analysis, agreement that the Conservatives have the best approach to welfare emerged as one of the factors most closely correlated with Conservative voting intention.

Immigration is a less clear cut success. Again, many people strongly supported Conservative plans, which they remembered from the election campaign, to restrict immigration from outside the EU (though they often lament the immigration from within the EU is the bigger problem), and to establish a Border Police force. It was very much less clear to them, though, exactly what had been done in the last year, prompting many to wonder whether any government will take the issue seriously. As I have written more than once before, the Conservatives do not need to push immigration further up their political agenda, since we have a big lead on the issue and people are more worried about our commitment in other areas – but we do need to show we are delivering on our promises.

Crime represents a Conservative coalition-building opportunity that is currently being missed. As my research report, *Crime, Punishment & The People* showed earlier this year, a firm approach to law and order is the very essence of the centre ground. One of the things people expected from a Conservative-led government, whether they voted for it or not, was a tough approach to crime, but so far they have been disappointed. Asked what the government was doing on the issue, previously one of the Conservative Party's strongest suits, most people thought only of police cuts – with some adding that they had heard we want to send fewer criminals to prison.

For many potential Conservative voters who doubt the party's intentions, the NHS serves as a litmus test. Many in our research believed the NHS was subject to cuts, though the government maintains its budget is being protected and increased. Most people were sceptical of the proposed reforms, and those who had noticed that some health professionals opposed them tended to take the same view. Nobody seemed to know is why the reforms were needed and how, even in theory, they were supposed to improve things for patients.

The grim backdrop to all these issues is the economy. Here the government retains a good deal of support but the research offers some warning signs. Voters recognised that cutting the deficit was the government's overriding purpose, and they agreed it should be an important priority. But for them, the more important factor was getting the economy growing and creating jobs. The two are complementary, of course, but voters thought the government appeared to see everything – economic growth, welfare reform, changes to sentencing policy, immigration control – as a means to the end of deficit reduction. But what is the end to which deficit reduction is the means? What are the bigger goals that a lower deficit will allow us to achieve? People did not feel the government had spelt out the benefits that the cuts would bring in the years to come. They understood that debt had to be brought under control, but many assumed the reason for the speed of the cuts was political as much as economic: the government wanted to cut while it could still plausibly blame Labour for the problem, and it wanted to have finished – and to be able to introduce tax cuts and other inducements – in time for the next election. And while the deficit seemed a rather abstract issue, detached from people's everyday lives, the cuts felt somewhat closer to home.

The political dangers for a government whose agenda seems to begin and end with cuts go beyond the hostility that the cuts themselves generate in some quarters. Many, after all, think the government is doing the right thing and give it extra credit for sticking to its guns over such difficult decisions. But the plan is to eliminate the structural deficit by the end of the parliament. If that is the government's defining purpose in the eyes of voters, and it achieves aim, its job is done. What are we going to do for an encore? What is the mission for which the Conservatives need to be re-elected? People may be glad we took the action we did, but they don't vote out of gratitude. Some voters see the government's purpose as a wider one of clearing up the mess, which goes beyond the deficit – but can we claim that as our job for the next parliament too?

As ever, building the Conservative voting coalition is as much about brand as about policy. They are not entirely separate: a party's brand is clearly helped by having policies that reflect voters' priorities, and delivering on them. For some voters, seeing the government get to grips with things will be enough to persuade them to hold their noses in the polling booth and take the Tory medicine. But voters also want to support a party that has a bigger vision they can identify with. Whether or not the Conservative Party "shares my values" emerged in our analysis as an important predictor of Tory voting intention.

The absence of a recognised overall theme beyond cuts needs to be addressed if the Conservatives are to hold together 2010 Tory voters and attract new ones. However commendable the idea of encouraging personal responsibility and relinquishing state control, the Big Society, the theme that is intermittently claimed as the government's guiding philosophy, shows no sign of resonating with voters. The very few who mentioned it during the course of our research usually did so in tones of

bemusement. Most people still do not understand what it is supposed to mean, or find the concept too nebulous to get to grips with. They do not connect it with any of the government's more concrete policies, whether they support them or not.

Views of the Prime Minister's performance are another critical determinant of voting intention. We found that both Conservative voters and Considerers were much more likely to have a positive than a negative opinion, and gave him higher ratings than they gave the government as a whole. He is commonly regarded as professional, human, better than his predecessor, and to be doing a good job in difficult circumstances. A few concerns emerged, however, including a feeling among some that he was not yet a strong enough leader. This was partly due to the fact of being in coalition and, consequently, not seeming to be fully in command. Some also felt this impression owed something to lack of experience, and that he would grow into the role. Some critics, particularly among the Considerers, also mentioned an air of inauthenticity, in that he "tries to show us he's one of us, but he's not".

Detailed analysis of our polling yielded some fascinating insights on how to build and maintain the Conservative voting coalition. It shows that putting together an election-winning vote share is not, in fact, a matter of trading off "core voters" against potential converts. For 2010 Tories who would vote for the party again tomorrow, a positive view of David Cameron was the most important distinguishing factor.

Headline voting intention figures in the polls obscure the fact that the Conservative Party has in fact lost close to one in eight of its voters from 2010. The reason the Tories still retain a share in the mid-thirties rather than the high twenties is that they have won over a section of the electorate which did not vote Conservative at the election. By far the most important feature of this group was the belief that the Conservatives had the best approach on the economy; this was followed by high approval ratings for the Prime Minister.

Unfortunately these welcome additions to the Conservative voting coalition were matched by the number of defectors, who voted Conservative in 2010 but would not do so in an election tomorrow. For half of these, the most important factor was that they did not think the Conservatives had the best approach to the economy; the great majority also felt the Tories were not the best party on the NHS. Given the other evidence, these were likely to include a high proportion of first-time Conservatives, who were worried about the cuts and had been wary of trusting the party on public services. For the other half, the strongest common factor was that they did not give high marks for David Cameron's performance.

Among those who did not vote Conservative in 2010, the best indicator of newfound Conservative support was whether they thought the Conservatives had the best approach to the economy. The number of former Labour voters available was limited even among the few who did take this view: just under one in four Labour voters who said the Tories were best on the economy said they would vote

Conservative tomorrow (though this compares to just three in a thousand of those who did not think this). Among former Liberal Democrats, prospects are better: nearly half of 2010 Lib Dem voters who thought the Conservatives were best on the economy and had a very positive view of David Cameron said they would vote Tory. This rose to two thirds if they also thought the Conservatives had the best approach to welfare. Those who thought the Conservatives were right on the economy but gave more middling marks to David Cameron were two and a half times as likely to vote Conservative if they also thought the Conservative Party shared their values.

Our complex segmentation analysis has actually revealed that the things that will build and maintain the Conservative voting coalition are the economy, David Cameron, welfare, crime, the NHS, and a demonstration that the Conservative Party shares people's values. These are fundamentally mainstream concerns that have the potential to expand the Conservative voting coalition and delight longstanding Tories at one and the same time. In other words, attracting new voters need not alienate existing supporters, and we do not have to pursue a separate agenda for each segment of voters. There is no need to engage in elaborate and slippery triangulation.

Moreover, the way to keep voters onside is not to second-guess which party they would end up with if they left. If we get it right on the big, mainstream themes, and have a clear overarching purpose, we will keep Conservative voters on board and attract new ones; if we get it wrong, they will scatter to the four winds (and not necessarily in the direction that might be expected: defectors from the Conservatives who do not think the Tories have the best approach to crime are as likely to have gone to Labour as to another party, as are those who think the Tories are best on crime but not on immigration). A defining purpose, and feeling that their concerns are being acted on, will galvanise those in the Conservative voting coalition, whether they would otherwise be inclined to drift to the left, or to the fringe.

Project Blueprint does not end here. Over time I intend to track the changing size and nature of the Conservative voting coalition, the strength of support in its different elements – including the enthusiasm of 2010 Tories – and ultimately the prospects of achieving an overall majority in four years. We will see whether the government is being seen to deliver, and whether it is getting the credit for tough decisions or the blame for tough times. And the project will remind people that it is the coalition of voters that matters, not the coalition of parties. As always, my message to the politicians is: it's not about you, it's about them.

MAA
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Methodology

Conservative voters

- An online poll of 1,502 people who voted Conservative at the 2010 general election was conducted between 25 February and 3 March 2011.
- Eight focus groups of people who voted Conservative at the 2010 general election were held in Elmet, Hastings, Brentford and Leamington between 2 and 15 March 2011. Separate groups of men and women were held at each venue.

Conservative 'Considerers'

- An online poll of 2,000 people who considered voting Conservative at the 2010 election but decided not to was conducted between 25 February and 3 March 2011.
- Eight focus groups of people who had considered voting Conservative in 2010 but decided not to were held in Hammersmith, Southampton, Dudley and Bolton between 16 and 28 February 2011. Separate groups of men and women were held at each venue.

General public

- An online poll of 10,238 adults was conducted between 10 December 2010 and 5 January 2011.

Conservative Party members

- A poll of 401 members of the Conservative Party was conducted between 4 and 9 March 2011. 300 interviews were conducted by telephone and 101 online.

Full data tables are available at lordashcroft.com.

Why they voted Tory (or didn't) in 2010

'Conservative voters' refers to people who voted Conservative at the 2010 general election. 'Considerers' refers to people who considered voting Conservative in 2010 but decided not to.

Voting history

According to our poll, 83% of those who voted Conservative in 2010 had done so in at least one previous general election (see page 49 for full poll results). Of those who considered voting Conservative but decided not to, 61% had voted for the party at a previous general election. Overall, 70% of those who voted Conservative or thought about doing so had done it before, and less than a third had no history of voting Conservative.

Reasons for voting Conservative (or considering it)

Conservative voters as a whole were evenly divided as to whether they had voted mainly for positive reasons (52%) or because they had negative views about Labour (48%). Nearly two thirds of first-time Tory voters said they had been motivated mainly by negative views of Labour.

Conservative Party members were under no illusions on this score. The majority quite rightly thought that most first-time Conservative voters had been driven more by their view of Labour than a positive view of the Tories.

Asked in the poll how important a number of different factors had been in their voting decision, the highest scoring was that the Conservatives "seemed more likely to get the economy back on track" – even beating, though only by a fraction, "it was time for a change from Labour and the Conservatives were the most obvious alternative". The perception that the party seemed more willing to reform welfare and cut the deficit also scored very highly, followed by the expectation that it would control immigration.

The evidence from the focus groups, though, was that people's decision to vote Conservative owed much more to general impressions than to policies. Many felt that Labour had run out of steam, and if there was little to choose between them on policy the Conservatives seemed fresher and more likely to get things done.

For Considerers in the focus groups, by far the most common reason for having thought about voting Conservative was loss of faith in Labour and Gordon Brown, and the need for change. Several also said they had been attracted by David Cameron, and some said that they thought the Conservatives would do better in a variety of specific policy areas, including the economy, tax, immigration, crime, welfare and education.

Most Considerers said they had thought about the Conservatives much more seriously in 2010 than in recent general elections. This was nearly always because they saw the Tories as more credible and attractive in their own right, not just because their view of Labour had declined so far: "There was a completely different party image with the Conservatives. It was a viable alternative for once"; "they were trying to say the party had changed to some degree. They tried to get to the centre ground, whereas Howard and Hague were quite right wing". Some also said the televised leaders' debates had made them think more broadly about the choice on offer than they would usually have done.

Reservations about voting Conservative

Our poll found that the single biggest reservation among those who voted Conservative in 2010 was over whether the party could be trusted to keep its promises. Lack of experience of government, doubts about how David Cameron would perform as Prime Minister, the scale and impact of spending cuts and whether they would look after the better off rather than the working classes or the vulnerable were also prominent.

This was reflected in the focus groups of Conservative voters. Having been out of government for so long the party was "new and untried", and though some of their plans sounded good "you never know until they do it"; "is anything going to change, and if it does will it be any better?" Some who had never voted Conservative before found the transition quite hard: "it's like being a football fan. It's like swapping sides. It's not an easy thing to do".

Conservative Party members also took quite a realistic view of other voters' reservations about voting Tory. They recognised the perception of the party as being for the better off, fears about the scale of cuts, trust on public services and concerns about inexperience. However, they rather overestimated the importance of straightforward loyalty to Labour as a barrier to switching, rating this as the second most important reason for voters deciding not to vote Conservative.

Our poll of the general public asked whether respondents "identify" with a political party ("that is, do you think of one party as consistently representing people like you and feel an affinity towards that party beyond the question of how you vote?") only 62% of those who voted Conservative in 2010 said they identified with the party according to this definition, compared with 71% of Labour voters who identified with the Labour Party. Less than a third of Liberal Democrat voters identified with that party, with nearly half saying they identified with no party.

Any regrets?

Very few of those who had voted Conservative said in the focus groups that they now regretted their decision. Some were concerned about the cuts or about specific

policies, or were frustrated that things were not improving fast enough, but most reflected that the situation would have been difficult whoever had won, and at least a new team were now trying to get to grips with the country's problems. Most felt that things would certainly have been no better had Labour been re-elected: "I did regret it to begin with, but if we had stayed with Labour how much worse would it have been?"

If you thought about voting Conservative, why didn't you?

Even though it had been improvements to the Conservative Party rather than a further decline in their view of Labour that had led them to take the Tories more seriously than at recent elections, it was a continuing lack of trust in the party that ultimately persuaded most Considerers not to vote Conservative. This stemmed from perceptions of the party's history and priorities, rather than any particular proposal. The idea that the Conservatives still favoured the rich rather than ordinary people was by far the most common barrier for Considerers, and there was concern about how far the Tories could be trusted with public services. Several also admitted that having come from a Labour family background they found it very hard to change.

Our poll of the general public found 21% of those who voted Labour in 2010 saying their political views and the way they voted had been influenced "a great deal" by how their parents voted. This compares to 15% of Conservative voters and 12% of Liberal Democrats.

This poll suggested that class identification still plays some part in voting decisions. 61% of those who described themselves as working class voted Labour in 2010, compared to 36% of those who voted Conservative. 60% of Conservative voters described themselves as middle class. (Overall, 46% of the public described themselves as working class – including three quarters of C2s, 48% of C1s and a quarter of ABs. Among those who described themselves as middle class, nearly half said their father was working class).

Some Considerers also had reservations about David Cameron, or said that there was so little to choose between the parties that they decided to stick with the devil they knew: "In the end it was because of the NHS. When I hear the Conservatives are going to reform the NHS it sets alarm bells ringing, because I think 'privatisation'; "They're a bunch of public schoolboys. They don't have the breadth, they're not a fair representation of the general public"; "The Conservatives stand more for the top earners and the higher classes. I just think Labour do care more about the working class"; "There's a lot of stigma with the Conservative Party for working class people, and that still runs now"; "There was still the legacy of the Thatcher years – will we go back to looking after the higher middle class and the working class get left?"; "It was a vibe from the Conservatives – snobbish, 'we're more educated than you, better than you, we only care about rich people'. At least Labour try to hide it"; "It's about

lifestyle. The things that are of interest to that group of people are not going to be of interest to others. The private education, the detached house, the four-by-four…"; "I wasn't brave enough to change my vote. A bit of me thought, he says all this but is he going to do it?"

The coalition

The election result and reactions to the coalition government

Many Conservative voters would have preferred to see an outright Conservative victory at the election and were unhappy about the coalition or concerned about how it would work: "It's a compromise so no-one gets what they wanted"; "I didn't vote for the Lib Dems. I felt they had done a deal, but they didn't do a deal with me". Several said they had been surprised, or even shocked and unsettled: "What did it mean? Previous coalitions have not lasted long and we have needed another election"; "They had different outlooks. I thought, is this going to be one big battle?"

This was by no means a universal view. Some who had been uncertain about voting Conservative were rather relieved at the outcome, and liked the idea of the two parties working together: "I was quite glad. It was nice to have a brake on them so they can't plough on and do what they want"; "A bit of a sigh of relief – I thought, we're going to get some change but there's going to be a bit of crossover between the parties"; "It was quite refreshing. It lifted morale"; "It was a Conservative government with little choosy bits of Lib Dem policies that I liked, like raising the tax threshold".

Considerers had greeted the formation of the coalition government with a mixture of surprise, confusion and scepticism, though several said it had been the only viable option and some had been rather pleased. Few were disappointed or angry.

Performance so far

Most participants in the Conservative voting focus groups were reasonably happy with the way the coalition had turned out, despite their early reservations. Some said it was doing much better than they had expected, but the more common response was that it was going fairly well considering the size of the job the government faced. Even so, some reiterated that a Conservative government with an overall majority would be stronger and less constrained by the need for compromise.

In the poll, Conservative voters as a whole were more likely to say the coalition government was doing better than they had expected (26%) than worse (20%); 54% said it was doing about the same as they had expected. However, there were two important divides.

First, men were much more positive about the coalition's performance than women – both among Conservative voters and Considerers.

Second, while previous Conservative voters said the coalition was doing "better" rather than "worse" than they had expected by 26% to 18%, nearly a third of first-time Tory voters said the coalition was doing worse than they expected (32%),

compared to 22% saying it was doing better. Party members were more likely than Conservative voters as a whole to say the coalition government had so far performed better than they had expected (33%).

Considerers were almost as likely as Conservative voters to say the coalition was doing better than they expected (25%), but were more likely to say it was doing worse (31%). In the groups, Considerers were as likely to give the government the benefit of the doubt, saying that it had a tough job that would take time, than to say that they disapproved: "They haven't had time yet to deliver, but they came in at a difficult time worldwide". Complaints usually related to the scale of cuts: "It doesn't affect someone in a big posh house. We have been here before".

A sizeable minority of Considerers gave the government credit for taking the right decisions in difficult circumstances: "They're doing what they need to do to get the country back on its feet, but it will take years"; "It's better than I expected. Our children will get all this debt. It's got to be paid back, and they are doing it fair and square".

Conservative voters said they would rather have a Conservative government with an overall majority than the current coalition by three to one. For first-time voters, the margin was lower, at two to one. For Considerers, though, the proportions were reversed: two thirds prefer the current Conservative-Lib Dem coalition to the alternative of a Conservative government. Even Considerers who later said they were more likely to think about voting Conservative at the next election as a result of the party's performance in government preferred the coalition to an overall Conservative majority, albeit by a lower margin (58% to 42%).

David Cameron, Prime Minister

Ratings for David Cameron's performance as Prime Minister were slightly better than those for the coalition as a whole, both among voters and Considerers, but with the same divides according to gender and voting history. Again, Conservative Party members were more likely to say that he had performed better than expected (34%) than Conservative voters as a whole (27%).

Asked to rate ten prominent politicians on their performance, David Cameron scored highest, followed by William Hague and Boris Johnson, among both Conservative voters and Considerers. Considerers ranked Nick Clegg higher than Conservative voters. Considerers awarded lower marks than Conservative voters for all politicians except Ed Miliband and Ed Balls – though they came bottom of both lists.

Among Conservative voters in the groups, though, there were some concerns about Mr Cameron's performance. They were unanimous that he was proving a better Prime Minister than Gordon Brown, and his strengths were that he was charismatic, straight-talking, professional, well-presented, human, and doing a good job in difficult circumstances. At the same time, several worried that he did not yet seem to be a strong enough leader – partly because being in coalition gave the impression

that he was not fully in command: “He’s still got to ask permission. It’s like he’s got the keys to drive the country but he’s got to have L-plates and dual controls”. Some felt he seemed slightly phoney or inexperienced, but there was an implied expectation that he would grow into the role: “Tony Blair looked like he belonged there, and with Gordon Brown it was ‘pull your trousers up’, but David Cameron is just there on the side. He’s not part of it yet”; “I don’t think he’s got enough grey hairs yet. Give him a war and see how he gets on”.

Considerers in the groups were more likely to have a positive than a negative view of Mr Cameron, with many saying he was a good speaker, well presented, capable, willing to admit mistakes, and much better than his predecessor. Critics mentioned inexperience, and sometimes a sense of fakeness: “he tries to show he’s one of us, but he’s not”.

Nick Clegg, Deputy Prime Minister

Some Conservative voters thought Nick Clegg was doing a reasonable job, but for most he had “receded into the shadows”; “you only ever see him sitting on the bench”. For some, his apparent lack of impact suggested weakness. However, few Conservative voters had strongly negative views of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Nor were Considerers particularly critical of Mr Clegg. Though a few saw him as a “lapdog” and many thought he had disappeared from the limelight, some said they sympathised with him – he had had little choice but to enter the coalition, in which his power was necessarily limited: “He would have been slaughtered if he had stayed with Labour”.

The Liberal Democrats

The polls found that Conservative voters were more likely than Considerers to think the Liberal Democrats were playing an influential role in government. Considerers (30%) were more than three times as likely as those who had voted Conservative (11%) to say the coalition was “essentially a Conservative government with some Liberal Democrat window dressing” (though first-time Conservative voters were more than twice as likely to say this as Conservative voters as a whole). Conservative voters were more likely to say it was a true coalition where decisions were made jointly, or a coalition led by the Conservatives in which the Lib Dems have a say. Conservative Party members were the most likely of all to think the Lib Dems had a substantial influence (31%).

A few of the Conservative voters in the groups thought of the government as “the Conservatives in power. It’s easy to forget the Lib Dems have anything to do with it”. More often, though, they would say that although the Conservatives clearly have most power on the basis of seats, “at the same time the Lib Dems must have some influence as the Conservatives need them to get anything through”; “the Tories are

annoyed because they can't say certain things. The Lib Dems have got more power than it looks like". Most, though, had no clear idea of any policy areas in which the Liberal Democrats had had a particular influence.

Several Considerers said they were glad the Lib Dems were there to have a restraining influence on the Conservatives, without which the government's policies would be even harsher than they were: "They're running roughshod anyway, so what would it be like if they were let free? They have been reined in a bit". More often, though, they said the coalition felt like a Tory government, and they sometimes forgot the Liberal Democrats were there at all.

Coalition policies and priorities

Asked what the coalition government regarded as its overall mission, by far the most common answer was dealing with the deficit. Some thought there might be a wider vision, but were not sure what it was, or that the parties had had to put their plans to one side because of the coalition or the financial situation. Overwhelmingly, though, both Conservative voters and Considerers thought the government's purpose began and ended with cuts and repairing the financial damage of the previous administration: "It's financial prudence"; "picking up the mess"; "stabilisation"; "damage control"; "the cuts are all you hear about"; "they've probably got a vision to try and get back to the manifesto pledges that are on the back burner"; "debt is the top priority and once they deal with that things will fall into place a little bit".

The groups discussed the coalition government's performance in a number of areas:

Welfare reform was an important priority both for Conservative voters and Considerers, and an area in which they felt the government was taking positive action. The groups generally grasped the purpose of the reforms, and although a few were concerned that people could hardly be forced into work if there were no jobs, the general reaction was overwhelmingly positive: "It's a big deal for them. They're testing people on incapacity. My neighbour got incapacity years ago and he sits there doing eight hours in the garden"; "now you can never be on benefits and earn more than if you were at work"; "there's a reform bill, and something to do with linking credit ratings to benefits to see who is cheating the system, which is a brilliant idea"; "if there is a deterrent for people sponging, that's good".

However, several felt that welfare reform had been introduced primarily as a means of cutting the deficit, rather than as an end in itself: "It is important to them but only for money saving". Some had also been impressed with changes higher up the income scale. One Considerer observed: "They've got rid of Child Benefit at a certain rate. That was a great step. That got my attention. I thought, maybe this is different, maybe these are different Conservatives".

Conservative voters were disappointed at the coalition's approach to **crime**. Though most said the issue was a big priority for them personally, they felt that police cuts showed the government was not following the policy they wanted to see: "they're

cutting money from the police but they say they want to make Britain a safer place. How's that going to work?"; "They're cutting bobbies on the beat. This area is losing a lot of police, it was just announced." Some had also heard about the government's changing approach to prisons and sentencing: "You can't get tough on crime if you just make them apologise for shoplifting"; "they're weak. I haven't heard them say they're building prisons and bringing in stiffer penalties". A few Conservative voters thought the government's crime policies would be tougher if the Tories had an overall majority.

Considerers took the same view: "they're cutting the police and letting more people out of jail early"; "how can you be tough on crime when you're taking money from the police?"; "they're on about not sending so many down and letting more out.

Immigration was high on Conservative voters' personal agenda, and many mentioned government plans including a points system, a Border Police force and a cap on numbers (though only from outside the EU – which several regarded as a serious drawback). However, the groups were unclear about which if any of these measures had yet been introduced: "I haven't noticed any change. nothing has been put out there"; "if they are doing what they wanted to do that would be tougher, but I don't know if they are doing it"; "they wouldn't dare. They talk about it but they never do anything". Some thought the Conservatives were being held back in their plans by the Liberal Democrats.

Likewise, the Considerers said immigration was very important to them, but there was resignation as to whether the issue would be properly dealt with, even though many thought it was a high Conservative priority. Though many recalled what had been promised or talked about, the groups were much less sure what was being done: "They're going to make it more difficult to come over. You've got to be skilled"; "They tried to do immigration but they can't because their hands are tied. If they're in the EU, anyone can come in"; "Aren't they limiting the number of people who can come into the country each year?"; "I think it's still in the pipeline".

Conservative voters tended to think the **NHS** was a higher priority for them than it was for the government. It was hard to see how the government could be improving the NHS while subjecting it to cuts (only a few recalled the coalition promising the NHS budget would be protected). There was a good deal of uncertainty and concern about the proposed structural reforms, particularly over whether GPs were the right people to be managing such large budgets, and some were worried that the plans would involve "privatisation". Nobody understood how the proposals were intended to benefit patients: "They're scrapping PCTs and giving more power to GPs. I think it's a bad idea – they've got a lot on their plate"; "I think they think they are improving it, but they are cutting at the rock face rather than the bureaucracy. When wards are losing beds, they are the wrong cuts"; "GPs will control the budget. It will tie them up with things that are not their job"; "They're talking about putting GPs in charge of everything. It's OK if you've got a good GP, but what if you've got a rubbish GP?" Considerers had similar opinions about current policies but were more

entrenched in their view that the Conservatives did not regard the NHS as a high priority, or were actively hostile.

On **schools**, Conservative voters were more likely to mention the creation of more academies than they were to mention cuts to the building programme. They tended to give the government some credit for trying to make improvements, though most were very hazy about the differences between academy schools and others. Considerers were more likely to focus on the cuts but also talked about the establishment of free schools, about which the groups were doubtful but not damning: "It isn't a priority for them because they've stopped all the builds"; "They scrapped improvements at my son's school. I'll never forgive them for that. Typical Conservatives. As soon as they got in, it was 'screw you'"; "this thing about schools that parents do – it's a good idea, I just can't see it taking off"; "I read something about Michael Gove. I think they are thinking about it. It was saying don't knock it, because it's a good idea – not the same old same old"; "I think it's quite a high priority, they just haven't got the funds to do it".

Most people did not consider the **environment** to be a high current priority relative to other issues, nor did they think it was for the government: "they will pay lip service when asked, but it's not high on their agenda". Several observed that environmental concerns often seemed to be a pretext for new taxes.

Cutting taxes was not thought to be a priority for the coalition, or a realistic hope given the public finances: "not worth thinking about for the next five or ten years"; "if they're taking money from taxes they've got to take it from somewhere else"; "it would be nice but realistically we know they can't do it"; "I think the Conservatives used to be interested in cutting taxes, but I don't think they're in a situation at the moment to do anything about it". Fuel duty was most often mentioned as the tax that should be cut first when it was possible to do so.

Conservative voters thought it was important to stand up to **Europe** ("I can't understand why Europe has such a big say in how much I pay for my car insurance"), but there were mixed views as to whether the government was actually doing so. All the groups had noticed the row over prisoners' voting rights, and most recognised that that government had forcefully expressed what they regarded as the correct view, but it was not clear whether it had put a stop to the idea ("they stood up on prisoners' voting rights and told Europe we're not complying") or whether "Europe" would get its way ("the government are a bit miffed but they haven't done anything"). Several of the Considerers recalled that the Conservatives had historically been Eurosceptic ("they don't like Europe, do they?"), a position which most endorsed, although most felt it to be a lower priority than most other issues.

Most Conservative voters and Considerers were bemused by the idea that the coalition was, or should be, **promoting or supporting marriage.** Some had heard the government talking about couples in relation to welfare reform. Few, however, thought supporting marriage in a wider sense was part of the government's agenda, or ought to be, whether in principle or as an effective way of tackling social

breakdown: “It shouldn’t have anything to do with politics”; “they do mention it occasionally and people groan”; “my parents weren’t married and I didn’t break into any cars”; “Both my children are unmarried with children. A wedding can be twenty grand. Isn’t it more important to get a house?”

There was some support among Conservative voters for the idea of the government **scrapping unnecessary rules and regulations**, but few had heard of any action in this area and the theme generated little excitement: “it’s not hugely important to me but it will save money if they get rid of some pointless pen-pushers”. Nobody felt they themselves were mired in red tape, and several thought this was an old political chestnut, and one person’s pointless regulation was another’s indispensable safeguard. However, several mentioned the scrapping of quangos, which was regarded as a good thing – some said that when they saw the list of quangos to be scrapped they had been amazed they had existed in the first place.

Many felt **small businesses** were an important priority, and assumed the government did too, but had heard little or nothing on the subject. The lack of bank lending was thought to be the biggest problem in this area, and though the government was trying to persuade banks to lend more it appeared not to have achieved much so far.

Very few participants knew what was meant by **cutting the size of the state**: “Lopping off Cornwall?”

The economy

Trust and growth

Conservative voters were fairly happy with the government's performance on the economy. Nearly nine out of ten thought "although things are difficult now, the right decisions are being made and things will improve significantly in the next three or four years" (though only 72% of first-time voters thought this). Considerers also took this view, but by a smaller margin: 38% thought that "in three or four years' time, the economy will be no better, or worse, than it is now".

Both Conservative voters and Considerers thought the government was placing more emphasis on deficit reduction than the economic growth that voters themselves regarded as a greater priority. Some thought the government probably did have a plan to help the economy grow and create jobs, but very few could say what it involved. Considerers in particular were worried that the private sector would not be able to create enough jobs to replace those lost in the public sector, particularly since many relied on public sector contracts.

Conservative voters were nearly unanimous in trusting David Cameron and George Osborne more than Ed Miliband and Ed Balls to handle the economy (96% to 4%). First-time Conservative voters also did so by an overwhelming margin (87% to 13%). Considerers also most trusted DC and GO by a wide margin (74% to 26%), but the gap was wider among men (54 points) than women (42 points).

Evidence from the focus groups suggested that a strong reason for the Conservative lead on the economy was the perceived lack of any credible alternative plan from Labour.

The deficit and the cuts

70% of Conservative voters said the cuts were "necessary and unavoidable and are the right thing for the economy", and a further 9% thought they did not go far enough (though only 54% of first-time Conservative voters thought this; they were more than twice as likely as Conservative voters as a whole to say "the cuts are too deep and are being made too quickly").

Conservative voters in the groups largely accepted the need for deep cuts, which would be necessary whichever party was in power. They also accepted that the necessary action would be uncomfortable for many people, including them, but that this too was unavoidable: "It's like ripping a plaster off. You've got to get it done".

However, there was a widespread feeling among both Conservative voters and Considerers that no-one had properly explained why the cuts had to be made so quickly, how ordinary people would benefit from deficit reduction, or even how the country had got into such a state: "Nobody ever said before the election, 'look what

we're doing, we're millions in debt', but suddenly they got in and we're millions in debt. I check my gas meter every month. How did we get into this drastic state?" Relatively few even mentioned the cost of interest payments on the government's debts as a reason to cut the deficit quickly. The absence of a clear understanding led some to see deficit reduction as a cover-all pretext for things the government wanted to do anyway: "They aren't explaining it clearly. It's just an excuse for everything. 'It's the deficit, we had to do it because of the previous government'."

In fact, many instinctively felt that addressing debt was best done sooner rather than later. But when asked for their own explanation for the speed of the cuts, people often assumed the government's motivation was political as much as economic: cutting early meant it could still plausibly blame the previous Labour government for the pain; it needed to be able to claim credit for a finished job by the end of the parliament; and, crucially, it would allow tax cuts or other inducements to be put in place in time for the next election: "If they want to be re-elected they will have to concentrate on other things before the election"; "they're doing it so quickly because in a few years' time they won't be able to say it's Labour's fault"; "they're trying to get the bad things out of the way first so by the time of the next election we will have forgotten"; "it's so they can finish the cuts in three years and start improving things in year four when the election is coming up".

Considerers (46%) were more than twice as likely as Conservative voters (21%) to say the cuts were too deep and too quick. Among both groups, women were significantly more likely than men to say the cuts were too severe.

In the groups, Considerers often said they understood the need to cut the deficit in principle but were concerned that the cuts were too severe, too fast, and hitting the wrong people (though when asked for alternative targets, there were few suggestions beyond high salaries for senior council staff and MPs' expenses). However, many also defended the government for being prepared to take the necessary action, however unpopular: "They are trying to take the bull by the horns. Whether they can pull it off I'm not sure, but the poor are going to be hit whatever happens, whoever is in".

Considerers who thought the government was cutting too quickly and deeply had mixed views as to why it was doing so. Only a third believed the government was hostile to public services and was using the deficit as an excuse for big cuts. As the focus groups confirmed, for most people the explanation is a combination of the government doing what it mistakenly thinks is right, and what it believes to be to its political advantage.

Among both Conservative voters and Considerers, there was some concern that rather than stopping after three or four years, the cuts might go on and on with no end in sight: "How long is it going on for? Is it going to be short and sharp, or will it go on for years and years?"; "When they get it right, is it ever going to stop?"

Brand

Party attributes

Considerers rated the Conservatives well ahead of other parties on hard factors: "willing to take tough decisions for the long term", "competent and capable", "will do what they say". However, they put Labour slightly ahead of the Conservatives, and the Liberal Democrats a long way ahead, on measures including "its heart is in the right place", "represents the whole country, not just some types of people", "wants to help ordinary people get on in life", "stands for fairness" and "stands for equal opportunity for all".

Men were more likely to agree that each positive attribute applied to the Conservatives than women – especially "on the side of people like me" (43% of men, 31% of women). This division did not apply for the other two parties.

Relative priorities

For Conservative voters and Considerers, the top priority was "getting the economy growing and creating jobs", followed by "cutting the deficit and the debt" and "reforming welfare to stop scroungers and cut benefit dependency". Both groups, though, thought the Conservative Party regarded dealing with the deficit as its top priority for them personally. Considerers thought "getting the economy growing" was only the third priority for the Tories, after cutting the deficit and reforming welfare.

There were some stark differences in perceived priorities lower down the scale, particularly among Considerers. For Considerers, dealing with crime and improving the NHS were the fourth and fifth priorities, with 79% and 75% respectively saying they were a high or very high priority. However, they saw these issues as being seventh and eighth on the Conservatives' priority list, with 43% and 42% respectively naming them in the top two categories.

The differences between the proportions who said an issue was important to them and who thought it was important to the Conservatives were bigger among Considerers – not just because of the perceived order of priorities, but because they seemed to lack evidence that the government has any priorities beyond cutting the deficit and reforming welfare (which many see as part of cutting the deficit rather than an end in itself).

Despite their preference for a Conservative government over the present coalition, majorities of Conservative voters thought such a government would be performing better than the current coalition in only three areas: reforming welfare, controlling immigration, and standing up for Britain in the EU. Substantial numbers also thought a Conservative government would do better at getting the economy moving, cutting the deficit, scrapping unnecessary rules and regulations and dealing with crime. In

most policy areas, though, they were more likely to say a Conservative government would be performing no better or worse than the current coalition.

Considerers were much less likely to think anything would be better under a Conservative government. A majority thought there would be no real difference in every policy area, but in four cases – the NHS, schools, taxes and protecting the environment – they were more likely to think a Conservative government with an overall majority would handle things worse than better.

The four areas in which Considerers were most likely to think that a Conservative government would perform better than the coalition (though still only a minority in each case) were welfare reform, immigration, controlling the deficit and standing up for Britain in the EU. Notably, these were the same areas in which Conservative Party members were most likely to say would be better handled by a Conservative government (though by very much bigger margins).

Again, there was a gender gap, with male Considerers more likely to say that each issue would be handled better by the Conservatives on their own (with the exception of schools).

Whose side?

Neither group thought the Conservative Party or the coalition was particularly on the side of people like them, but for different reasons. For Conservative voters, it was nothing personal – times were hard, particularly for people in the middle, but the economic situation meant the government was not in a position to offer much to anybody at the moment: "they see their job as stabilising the country"; "they're looking at the whole of society. There are cuts for everyone"; "I think the deficit and the debt are more important at the moment"; "I don't think they think about particular people. They are just looking at the numbers".

Among Considerers, though, the perception remained that the Tories were not only not on their side, but were on the side of someone other than them – indeed this had been one of the most important factors in their decision not to vote Conservative. Several mentioned ways in which they felt they were be affected by government policies, including the VAT rise, high fuel taxes and changes to tax credits, and some felt they were at the bottom of the government's priority list.

Some volunteered that comparing the issues on which the government had performed u-turns after public pressure and those where it had not showed what sort of people it prioritised. Though pressing ahead with cuts that hit the less well off, Ministers had backtracked when some middle class people complained about selling the forests: "There was all this fuss about selling the forests and suddenly there was a u-turn, but they didn't do one on tuition fees. These middle class people in the New Forest made a fuss and they caved in. I would rather they kept the EMA and sold a bit of the forest. Once you've seen one pony you've seen them all"; "that

was the people who are his voters, middle England. They think people who go rambling are working class, but they're not, they're middle class people".

Up or down in voters' estimation?

A quarter of Conservative voters and Considerers said their view of the Conservatives had changed for the better since the election. First-time voters were slightly more positive, with one third saying their view of the party had changed for the better, compared to 21% of previous Conservative voters (who were more likely to say their view had not changed at all); 19% said it had changed for the worse, compared to 15% of previous Conservative voters. Considerers (27%) were more likely than voters (16%) to say it had changed for the worse.

Conservative voters who said their view of the party had changed for the better said they liked the fact that it was taking tough decisions and getting things done, that it was addressing the deficit despite the difficulties, that it was working well in coalition, and that it seemed prepared to listen and admit mistakes. Considerers whose view of the party had improved were also most likely to say it was getting things done, but the next most important factor, above dealing with the deficit, was their view of David Cameron's performance as Prime Minister.

Conservative voters whose view of the party had changed for the worse complained that the cuts were too deep or quick or being made in the wrong places, that they did not like the coalition or thought too many concessions were being made to the Liberal Democrats, and that the party was not delivering on its promises or was committing U-turns.

By far the most important factor for Considerers whose view had changed for the worse was the scale and impact of cuts. This was followed by the perception of broken promises, that the Conservatives seemed to be protecting the interests of the better off while hitting the vulnerable, and that tax rises and the cost of living was making life harder for ordinary people.

The opposition

Almost none of the Conservative voters had a good word to say about the Labour Party, including first-time Conservatives who had previously voted for Tony Blair. Many observed that the party only ever contradicted the government, and the automatic nature of Labour's opposition meant their attacks lacked credibility. Several observed that no constructive alternative was being offered: "Labour have got a long way to go before they can mount a serious challenge"; "they're licking their wounds"; "they're just saying 'don't do any cuts'. The usual"; "everything they say is just the opposite of what the coalition say"; "there's only so much they can say because they're the reason we're in this mess"; "they're just opposed to everything".

Neither were the Conservative voting groups impressed with Ed Miliband. Several said the party had chosen the wrong brother, and he seemed very unlikely to

become Prime Minister: "Not up to it. Fish out of water"; "professional politician. He hasn't got a clue what goes on outside politics"; "he hasn't said how he would do things differently. Hasn't come up with an alternative"; "his brother had more about him"; "he's just there for a few years until they find someone else".

Considerers in the groups were just as damning of Labour as the Conservative voters. The party offered no credible alternative since "they haven't come up with any policies, they're just arguing". Labour's only message was opposition to the cuts, "but they're the ones who left a note in the office saying there's no money left". Most thought that if Labour had remained in office the same cuts would have had to be made. For those who thought Labour would have "carried on spending", though, this did not indicate a more favourable view – rather it suggested the party would have been unwilling to face up to the scale of the crisis.

Considerers were also practically unanimous in their assessment of the Labour leader: "They picked the wrong Miliband"; "It's the same as the Conservatives after John Major – they didn't know what to do"; "Doesn't give you confidence when he speaks"; "Posh. If you said 'draw a typical posh person, he'd be the one you'd draw"; "He's an absolute tool. He says, whatever the Conservatives do, say it's the wrong thing. What's all that about?"

For Conservative voters in the groups, UKIP was not a serious option, even among those who were familiar with the party ("Who? Never even heard of it"; "Are they the ones who wear silly hats?"). Most had not heard of Nigel Farage, and some thought the party was still led by Robert Kilroy-Silk. Some said they often agreed with what Mr Farage said, but that they saw UKIP as a single-issue party whose low level of support meant it would be a wasted vote: "Farage sometimes makes a lot of sense and is quite likeable, but no matter what he talks about he brings it all back to Europe"; "they would get us out of Europe, but what else would they do?"; "if 70% of decisions are taken in Europe, he does have a point. But they're not powerful enough, there are not enough candidates, they're not going to form a government"; "it's just a group of people who don't like Europe getting together to say 'we don't like Europe'."

Election 2015

Direction of travel

Conservative voters said they were moving "towards" rather than "away from" the Conservative Party by 55% to 10%. They were moving away from Labour (by 67% to 5%) and the Liberal Democrats (by 30% to 17%). First-time Conservative voters were nearly as likely as others to say they were moving towards the Tories, but were also twice as likely to say they were moving away (21%). They were also more than three times as likely to say they were moving towards Labour (17%), though a majority (54%) still said they were moving away from Labour.

Considerers were as likely to say they were moving towards the Conservatives as away (33% in each direction). Within this group, though, men were moving towards the party by 35% to 31%, and women moving away by 35% to 30%. Considerers as a whole were also more likely to be moving away from rather than towards Labour (by 46% to 26%) and the Liberal Democrats (by 35% to 22%). 18-24 year-olds were the most likely to say they were moving away from the Conservatives (44%), and younger Considerers were also more likely to say they were moving towards Labour.

31% of Considerers said that the performance of David Cameron and the Conservatives in government made them more likely to think about voting Tory than they had been before; 29% said they would be less likely and 40% said they would be no more or less likely. (In other words – depending how you look at it – 71% were at least as likely to vote Conservative next time as they were last time, or 69% were no more likely to vote Conservative than they were last time). Male Considerers said they were more rather than less likely to vote Tory next time by 33% to 26%; women were less likely by 32% to 28%. 44% of 18-24s said they were now less likely to consider voting Conservative – the highest proportion of any age group.

A quarter of Conservative voters said they could see themselves voting Labour at some time in the future. 42% said they could see themselves voting Liberal Democrat, and 36% said they could see themselves voting UKIP.

Over a third of Conservative Party members said they could see themselves voting UKIP at some time in the future – though they were also more likely than average to say their preferred outcome of the next election would be an overall Conservative majority.

Preferred result

Three quarters of Conservative voters said they would like to see a Conservative government with an overall majority as the outcome of the next election; 17% said they would like another Conservative-Lib Dem coalition. Among first-time Conservative voters the proportion preferring a Conservative government was 60%. This group was more than twice as likely as 2010 Conservative voters generally to

want a Labour government or a Labour-Lib Dem coalition next time (22%, compared to 10% of Conservative voters overall).

Most Considerers said they would their preferred outcome would be to see the Conservatives back in government in some form, but they were equally likely to want to see an overall majority (31%) and another Con-Lib Dem coalition (31%). Men were more likely to prefer a Conservative government than women. A quarter of Considerers would prefer to see a Labour government after the next election, and 13% a Labour-Lib Dem coalition. A third of those who had never voted Conservative wanted to see a Labour government, compared to 19% of those who had voted Conservative previously. Only a fifth of those who had never voted Conservative wanted to see a Conservative government, compared with 38% of those who had.

Voting intention…in 2015

79% of Conservative voters said they would probably vote for the party again in 2015; 11% said they didn't know, and the remainder were scattered among the other parties. Among first-timers, only 57% said they would probably vote Conservative again, and 21% didn't know. Conservative voters who in 2010 had been motivated mainly by negative views of Labour were less likely to vote Conservative again (69%) than those who had felt positive towards the Tories (89%).

Most of the Conservative voters in the groups expected to stick with the party at the next election, though some said they would want evidence that current policies were producing results. Several said they would need to see that things were heading in the right direction but would not necessarily need to be solved completely, since it would take a long time to clear up the mess the government inherited.

Considerers were evenly divided between the Conservatives (22%), Labour (21%) and the Liberal Democrats (23%). 10% said they would probably vote for other parties, and 23% didn't know. Only 14% of Considerers who had never voted Conservative said they would probably do so next time, compared to 28% of those who had voted for the party previously. Of the Considerers who had said they were more likely to think about voting Conservative next time as a result of the party's performance in office, only 59% said they would probably do so; 18% didn't know, and 16% said they would probably vote Lib Dem.

In the Considerers' groups, very few said they would probably vote Labour in 2015. Several were leaning towards the Conservatives because they supported the action they were taking on the deficit, but most said they would give the coalition at least another two years before they started to make up their minds.

Conservative voters said they would rather vote for a Conservative than a joint coalition candidate by 84% to 16%. Considerers, though, would prefer a coalition candidate to a Conservative by 61% to 39%. Qualitatively, though, there was strong resistance to the idea of joint candidates among both groups – the Conservatives and

Liberal Democrats remained separate parties with different agendas and voters wanted to be able to choose from the full range of options.

In the groups, most Conservative voters expected the next election to produce either a Conservative majority (especially if the economy is growing and the coalition's policies are seen to be paying off) or another hung parliament. Very few expected to see Labour back in government in 2015. Considerers were as likely to expect a Conservative overall majority as a Labour victory – but as with their own voting decision, many thought it was much too early to make predictions.

Building the Conservative voting coalition

The following analysis is based on a 10,000-sample poll completed in early 2011. The purpose of the poll was not primarily to measure the level of support for each party, but the drivers of that support, particularly for the Conservatives. In the analysis that follows, therefore, the size of the overall vote share is secondary to the breakdown of the vote, and the factors most closely associated with strength of support for a particular party. Even if vote shares have changed in the interim, the principal drivers behind people's votes are unlikely to have done so significantly.

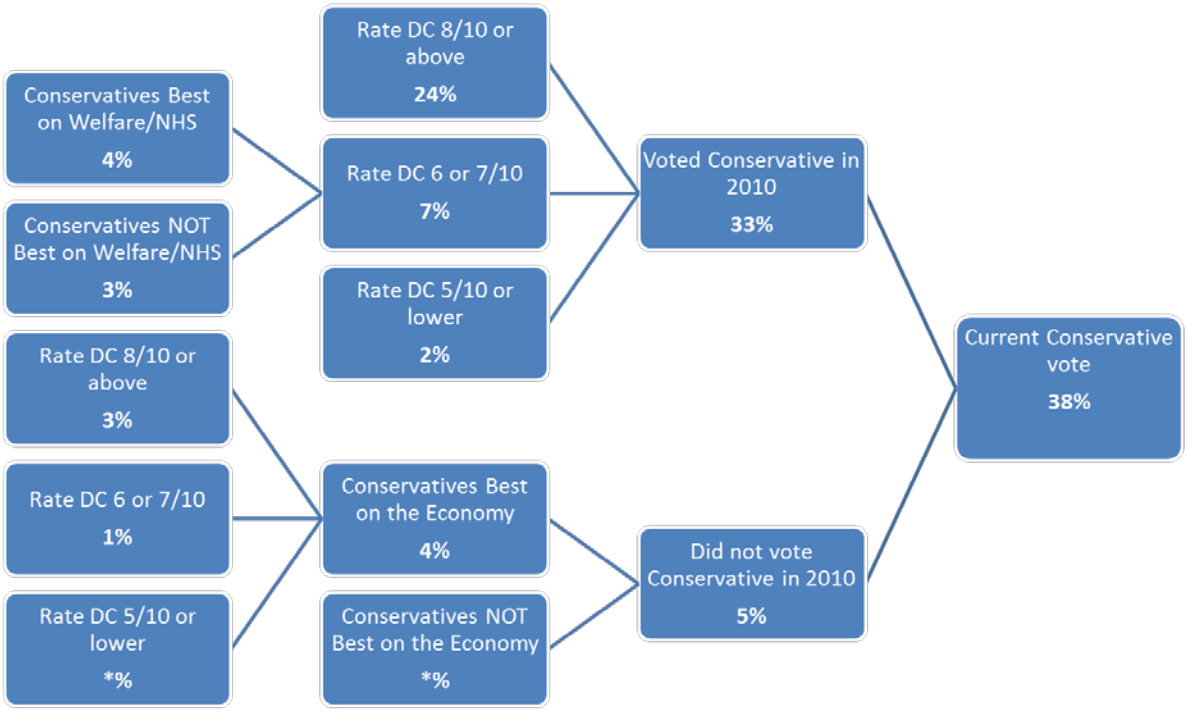
The poll asked respondents a host of questions on subjects that could have a bearing on their political views. These included their voting history, parents' voting history, class identification, newspaper readership, economic optimism, personal character traits, agreement with statements about social and political issues, perceptions of political parties, the best party on specific issues, ratings of party leaders, and comprehensive demographic information. The data was analysed to identify the factors most closely associated with support for each party.

More detailed analysis was conducted to break the population into segments, ordered according to their propensity to support the Conservative Party.

This has helped to illustrate:

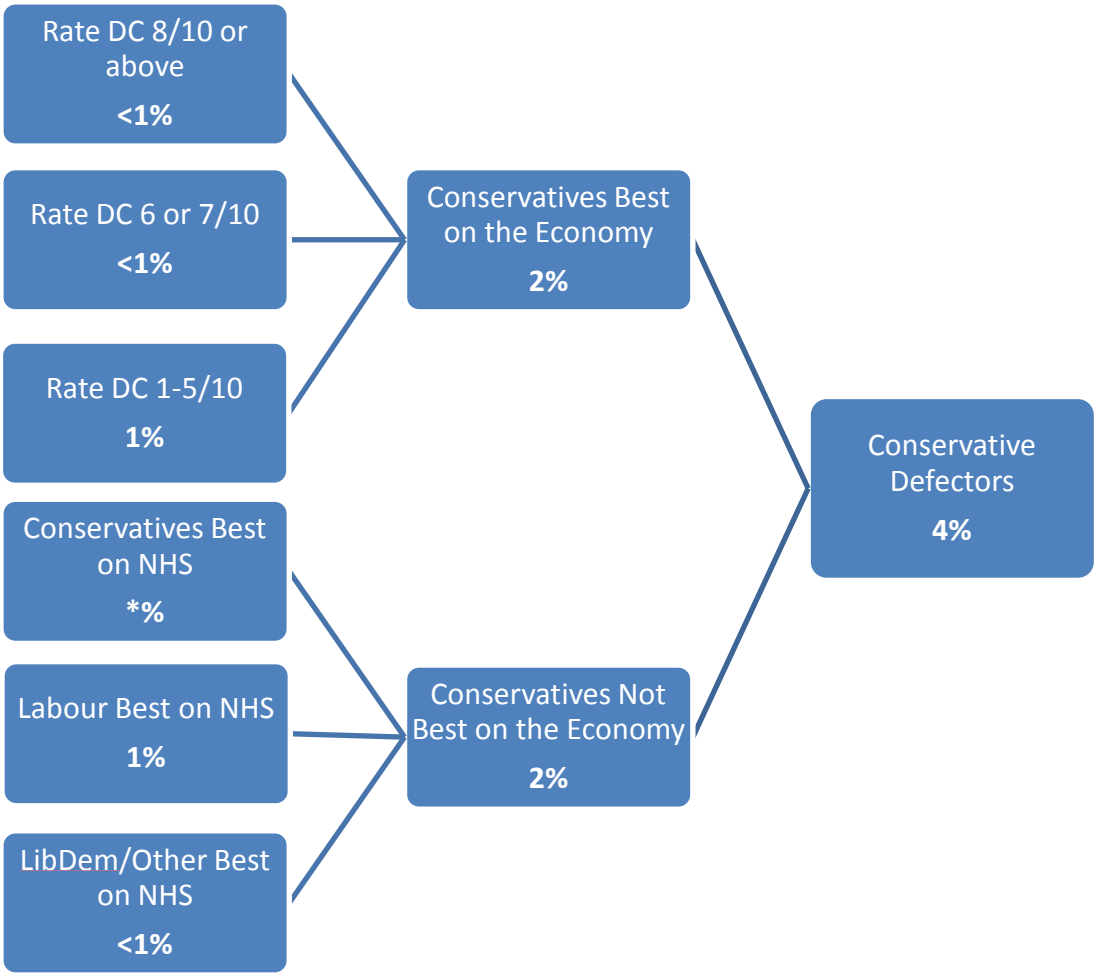
- ☐ The factors that discriminate between different groups of voters within the Conservative Party's current overall support.
- ☐ The factors that define different groups among the party's current supporters who also voted Conservative in 2010.
- ☐ The most important factors among those who did not vote Conservative in 2010, but say they would do so in an election tomorrow.
- ☐ The most important factors among those who voted Conservative in 2010 but say they would not do so in an election tomorrow, and which parties they are likely to support instead.
- ☐ The most important factors among different groups of voters among whom Conservative support is weak, but who need to be brought into the Conservative voting coalition.

Breakdown of the Conservative vote



- Of the Conservatives' 38% vote share at the time the fieldwork was conducted, 33% (just under 9 out of 10 of those who said they would vote Conservative at the next election) had voted Tory in 2010. David Cameron was the most important unifying factor among 2010 Tories who would vote for the party again tomorrow. Nearly three quarters of this group rated his performance at 8 out of 10 or better. Conservative voters from 2010 who gave high marks to David Cameron accounted for nearly two thirds of all those who said they would vote Conservative next time.
- 5% of voters said they would vote Conservative in an election tomorrow even though they had not voted Conservative in 2010. (Our poll found 11% of 2010 Lib Dems and 3% of 2010 Labour voters saying they would now vote Conservative). By far the most important factor for this group was the belief that the Conservatives had the best approach to the economy. Most of this group also awarded high marks for David Cameron's performance as Prime Minister.

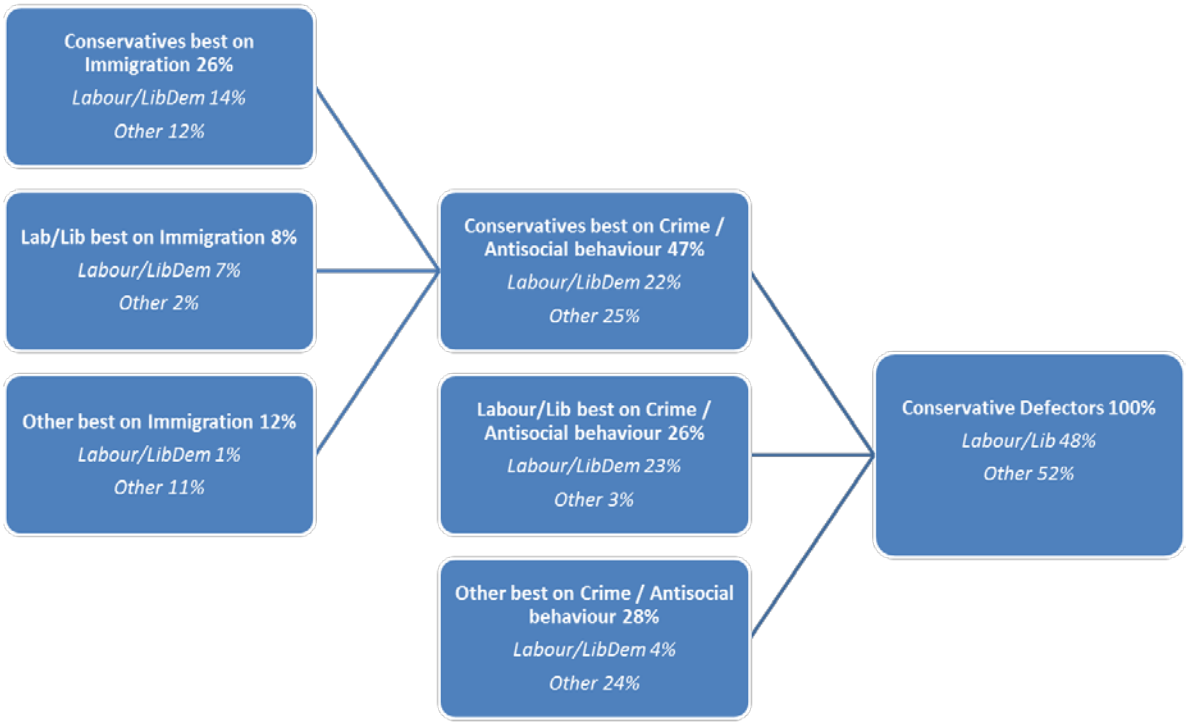
Why have defectors defected?



- Our poll found 88% of those who voted Conservative at the 2010 election saying they would do so again in an election tomorrow. 12% of the party's 2010 voters had therefore defected, equivalent to 4% of voters in this poll.
- Two main factors were at work among those who voted Conservative in 2010 but would not do so in an election tomorrow. For around half, the most common factor was that they did not think the Conservatives had the best approach to the economy. The overwhelming majority of these also did not think the Conservatives had the best approach to the NHS. The other polling and qualitative evidence detailed above suggests that this group largely comprised first-time Conservative voters, who were more likely to be concerned about the cuts and more wary about trusting the Conservatives on public services.
- For the other half of Conservative defectors, the most important factor was that they did not give high marks for David Cameron's performance as Prime Minister, even though they thought the Conservatives had the best approach to the economy. Some defectors, however, gave high marks to David Cameron and thought the Conservatives were best on the economy, and must therefore have

been driven by a range of other factors, but the sample size of this subgroup is too small for meaningful analysis.

Where have defectors gone – and why?



- Overall, Conservative defectors divided roughly evenly between Labour or the Liberal Democrats, and other parties.
- The factors at work in defectors' decision not to vote Conservative (the economy, the NHS and views of David Cameron) were not the same as the factors that determined which party they said they would vote for instead. Here, the key discriminator was which party they thought had the best approach to crime and antisocial behaviour.
- Around half of defectors did not think the Conservatives had the best approach to crime. Of these, around half thought Labour or the Lib Dems were best on the issue – in which case they were overwhelmingly likely to vote for one of those parties. Those who thought another party was best on crime were far more likely to vote for others.
- Within the half of defectors who thought the Conservatives had the best approach to crime, the strongest discriminating factor was immigration. Those who did not think the Conservatives were best on immigration were nearly as

likely to say Labour or the Lib Dems were best on the issue as they are to say this of another party.

- Around a quarter of defectors, equivalent to 1% of voters in this poll, thought the Conservatives had the best approach to both crime and immigration, and must therefore have been motivated by other factors. These voters divided quite evenly between Labour or the Liberal Democrats, and other parties. This subgroup is too small for meaningful analysis, but the evidence on defectors' motives overall suggests the economy, cuts and the NHS may have been important factors.

Drivers of Labour support

- The strongest single indicator of whether a voter would vote Conservative tomorrow was whether they voted Conservative in 2010. This was not the case with Labour voters – for them, the most important discriminating factor was which party had the best approach to the economy. 84% of those who thought Labour were best on the economy said they would vote Labour tomorrow, compared to 7% of those who preferred the Conservatives' economic approach.
- How someone voted in 2010 was the next best predictor of Labour support. 63% of the few who said the Conservatives were best on the economy but voted Labour in 2010 said they would vote Labour again tomorrow; this rose to 81% of those who also thought Labour had the best approach to schools.
- Ed Miliband was a very much less important factor for Labour voters than David Cameron was for Conservative voters. Of those who thought Labour were best on the economy and voted Labour in 2010, but gave Ed Miliband very low marks (1 to 3 out of 10), 92% still say they would vote Labour tomorrow. 87% of this group would do so even if they also thought Labour was not "competent and capable" (suggesting a strong continuing tribal element within the Labour vote).
- Of those who thought Labour had the best approach to the economy but voted Liberal Democrat in 2010, 71% said they would vote Labour tomorrow. Over half this group still said they would do so even though they gave relatively high marks (4 to 10 out of 10) to Nick Clegg.
- Former Liberal Democrat voters made up one of Labour's most solid segments of support. These voters thought Labour had the best approach to the economy, gave very low marks to Nick Clegg (1 to 3 out of 10), and agreed that Labour stands for fairness. Nine out of 10 voters in this group said they would vote Labour tomorrow.

Drivers of Liberal Democrat support

- ☐ As with the Conservatives, the best predictor of Liberal Democrat support was a vote for the party in 2010 – though only 45% of those who voted Lib Dem at the last election said they would do so again tomorrow.
- ☐ This rose to 75% if they also gave 8 out of 10 to Nick Clegg (the next most important factor) and 84% if they gave him 9 or 10 out of 10. However, support fell to 38% among 2010 Lib Dem voters who marked him at 4 or 5, 20% of those who gave him 3, and 8% of those who gave him 1 or 2 out of 10.
- ☐ After views of Nick Clegg, the best discriminating factors between Lib Dem support or non-support were whether or not voters thought the party had the best approach to welfare, schools and the NHS.

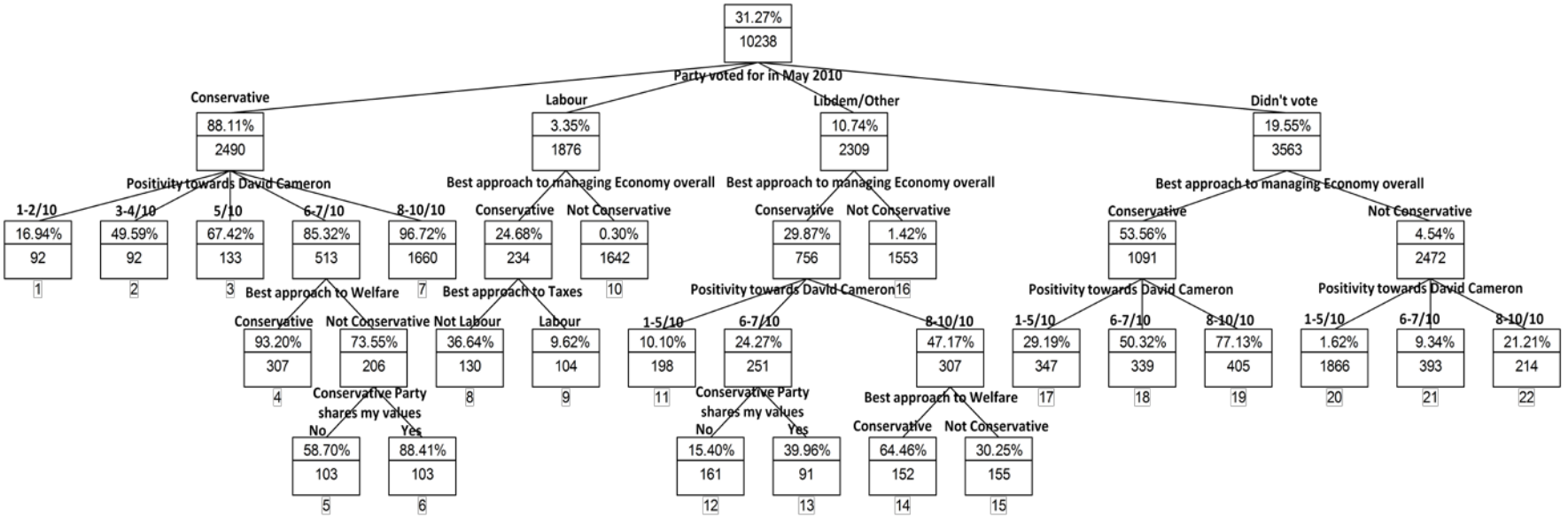
The Conservative gain chart

Segment no. (see Tree, p35)	How voted in 2010	% of pop in each segment	% of 2010 voters in each segment	% who would vote Con tomorrow in each segment	% of Cons current vote share (likely voters only)	Defining Features
7	Con	16%	25%	97%	24.0%	David Cameron 8+/10
4	Con	3%	5%	93%	4.3%	DC 6-7/10; Cons best on welfare
6	Con	1%	2%	88%	1.4%	DC 6-7/10; Cons NOT best on welfare; Cons share my values
19	Didn't	4%		77%		Cons best on economy; DC 8+/10
3	Con	1%	2%	67%	1.3%	DC 5/10
14	LD/Other	1%	2%	64%	1.5%	Cons best on economy; DC 8+/10; Cons best on welfare
5	Con	1%	2%	59%	0.9%	DC 6-7/10; Cons NOT best on welfare; Cons DON'T share values
18	Didn't	3%		50%		Cons best on economy; DC 6-7/10
2	Con	1%	1%	50%	0.7%	DC 3-4/10
13	LD/Other	1%	1%	40%	0.5%	Cons best on economy; DC 6-7/10; Cons share my values
8	Lab	1%	2%	37%	0.7%	Cons best on economy; Labour NOT best on taxes
15	LD/Other	2%	2%	30%	0.7%	Cons best on economy; DC 8+/10; Cons NOT best on welfare
17	Didn't	3%		29%		Cons best on economy; DC 1-5/10
22	Didn't	2%		21%		Cons NOT best on economy; DC 8+/10
1	Con	1%	1%	17%	0.2%	DC 1-2/10
12	LD/Other	2%	2%	15%	0.4%	Cons best on economy; DC 6-7/10; Cons DON'T share my values
11	LD/Other	2%	3%	10%	0.3%	Cons best on economy; DC 1-5/10
9	Lab	1%	2%	10%	0.1%	Cons best on economy; Labour best on taxes
21	Didn't	4%		9%		Cons NOT best on economy; DC 6-7/10
16	LD/Other	15%	23%	1%	0.3%	Cons NOT best on economy
20	Didn't	18%		2%		Cons NOT best on economy; DC 1-5/10
10	Lab	16%	25%	0%	0.1%	Cons NOT best on economy
		100%			**38%**	

- ☐ Analysis of the 10,000 sample poll has divided voters into 22 segments. The segments are based on their common characteristics derived from their answers to the poll questions, and they are not of equal size. In the Gain Chart, the segments are listed in order of their members' propensity to say they would vote Conservative at an election tomorrow. It also shows how each segment voted in 2010, its size in relation to the population as a whole, its size in relation to the total numbers who voted in the 2010 election, and the proportion of its members saying they would vote Conservative tomorrow. It also shows the most important factors that distinguish that segment from the others. For example:
    - o Segment 7 comprised 16% of the population and 25% of all 2010 voters, and accounted for 24% of the 38% saying they would vote Conservative tomorrow. Nearly 97% of people in this segment said they would vote Conservative at the next election, and their most important defining characteristic was that they rated David Cameron's performance at 8 out of 10 or better. All of them voted Conservative in 2010.
    - o Everyone in Segment 14 voted Liberal Democrat in 2010, but 64% of them said they would vote Conservative in an election tomorrow. They accounted for 2% of 2010 voters and contributed 1.5% to the Conservative share of the vote at the time of the poll. The most important discriminating factors in this group were that they thought the Conservatives had the best approach to the economy, they rated David Cameron 8 out of 10 or better, and they thought the Conservatives had the best approach to welfare.
- ☐ The two biggest segments of those who voted in 2010 comprise solid party supporters. In Segment 7, accounting for 16% of the population, 97% said they would vote Conservative tomorrow; in Segment 10, which is the same size, close to none said they would do so. In between, the segments were much smaller and the propensity to vote Conservative varied. The Defining Features of each segment give some indication of the factors that will increase their likelihood of voting Conservative.
- ☐ In Segments of 2010 Conservative voters, propensity to vote Tory varied from 17% to 97%. The variation is explained by differences in their view of David Cameron. The aim should be to move those in Segments 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 into Segment 7. Showing that the Conservatives have the best approach to welfare, and that the party shares their values, are the next most important drivers for increasing current Conservative support among 2010 Tory voters.
- ☐ For 2010 Liberal Democrats, the keys to increasing propensity to vote Conservative are persuading those who do not currently think the Conservatives have the best approach to the economy, improving their view of David Cameron, and demonstrating that the Conservatives share their values.

- ☐ Labour voters from 2010 are less available, but again the most important factor is winning the economic argument. Showing that the Conservatives have the best approach to taxes will also help to convert some former Labour voters.
- ☐ Segments of voters to whom at least one of the following applies – they voted Conservative in 2010; they thought the Conservatives had the best approach to the economy; they had a positive view of David Cameron – accounted for 52% of those who voted in 2010. This is a promising pool from which to build an election-winning Conservative voting coalition. Within these segments, though, propensity to vote Conservative tomorrow ranged from 97% down to 10%. Increasing the conversion rate among these voters – who already have at least some important positive views about the party – is the key to achieving a vote share of the kind required for an overall majority.
- ☐ This is further illustrated overleaf by the "tree", which shows more clearly how Conservative support varies between different segments of voters according to their most important distinguishing characteristics.

The voter tree



- The number at the bottom of the box shows the number of individuals in that group, out of a total sample of 10,238. The percentage at the top of each box shows the proportion of the group saying they would vote Conservative in an election tomorrow. E.g. Of the 2,490 people in our sample who voted Conservative in May 2010, 88.11% said they would vote Conservative in an election tomorrow.

- For those who voted Conservative in 2010, their likelihood of doing so again was most closely associated with their view of David Cameron. Only 17% of those who awarded him very low marks for his performance said they would vote Conservative tomorrow (Segment 1), compared to 97% of those who gave him 8 or more out of 10 (Segment 7).
- Within the group of Conservative voters who awarded David Cameron 6 or 7 out of 10, the best discriminator is whether or not they thought the Conservative Party had the best approach on welfare. 93% of those who thought it did would vote Conservative tomorrow (Segment 4), compared to 73% of those who did not. Among this latter subgroup, 88% would vote Conservative if they also thought the Conservative Party “shares my values" (Segment 6), compared to just over half of those who did not think this (Segment 5).
- The importance of “shares my values” is also seen among those who voted Liberal Democrat in 2010. Among former Lib Dem voters who thought the Conservatives had the best approach to managing the economy and gave fairly high marks to David Cameron, 40% said they would vote Conservative tomorrow if they also said the Conservatives “share my values” (Segment 13). This dropped to 15% among 2010 Lib Dems who had the same view of the economy and David Cameron, but did not think the Conservatives shared their values (Segment 12).
- Nearly half of 2010 Lib Dems who said the Conservatives were best on the economy and marked David Cameron at 8 or more out of 10 said they would vote Conservative tomorrow. This rose to nearly two thirds among those who also said the Conservative Party had the best approach to welfare (Segment 14).
- 2010 Labour voters showed less propensity to switch to the Conservatives. Effectively, they were only open to the Conservatives if they thought the Tories had the best approach to the economy. A quarter of former Labour voters who thought this would vote Conservative in an election tomorrow, rising to 37% if they also thought Labour did not have the best approach to tax (Segment 8).
- Just under a third of those who did not vote in 2010 said the Conservatives had the best approach to the economy, and just over half of this group said they would vote Conservative tomorrow. However, they were much more likely to do so if they also gave high marks to David Cameron: 77% of this group who rated him at 8 out of 10 or above would vote Conservative (Segment 19), compared to 29% of those who rated him at 1 to 5 (Segment 17). A fifth of non-voters who

did not think the Conservatives had the best approach to the economy nevertheless said they would vote Conservative if they also rated David Cameron at 8 or above (Segment 22).

- ☐ Failing to vote in the previous election has proved a reliable predictor of failure to vote in a subsequent election, so any party should be cautious of relying on voters who did not turn out in 2010. However, there is scope to increase turnout from the 65% seen at the last election, and it is not impossible that some voters who were uncertain or disillusioned have been sufficiently surprised and impressed by David Cameron and the Conservatives in office to support them in the future.

Key lessons from the segmentation analysis

- ☐ For 2010 Conservative voters, the most important single factor in predicting whether they would vote Conservative again was their view of David Cameron.
- ☐ For those who did not vote Conservative at the last election, the most important factor was whether the Conservatives had the best approach on the economy. This was followed by their view of David Cameron, whether they thought the Conservatives shared their values, and the party's approach to welfare.
- ☐ For those who voted Conservative in 2010 but would not do so in an election tomorrow, the biggest factors were the economy, the NHS and their views of David Cameron. Which party they supported instead was largely determined by who they thought had the best approach to crime.
- ☐ To build an election-winning vote share, the Conservatives need to increase the propensity to vote Tory within each segment of the electorate, particularly the most promising ones, or move people from the less supportive segments to those with a higher hit rate. The second of these will be the most fruitful: only a limited number of votes will be available from those who think the Conservatives are wrong on the economy, do not rate David Cameron or do not think the Conservative Party shares their values, and there will be diminishing returns in the segments where propensity to vote Conservative is already very high. In some cases it is not possible to shift people between segments – for example, the best predictor of Conservative support is whether someone voted Conservative in 2010, and they can't change that. But the Conservatives can move people by winning the economic argument, demonstrating positive action on important policy areas like welfare, showing leadership and continuing to rehabilitate the Conservative brand.
- ☐ The implication of the segmentation analysis is that success in certain areas could move votes on a dramatic scale:
    - Improving views of David Cameron among 2010 Conservative voters who gave him 5 out of 10 to a point where they would award 8 out of 10 could make them one third more likely to vote Conservative – for every three of these people whose view is changed in this way, the party would get another vote.
    - If Labour voters who did not think the Conservatives had the best approach to the economy can be persuaded to change their minds, their chance of voting Conservative could rise by a factor of 82 – from three in a thousand to one in four.
    - 2010 Liberal Democrat voters who thought the Conservatives were right on the economy were 21 times as likely to say they would vote Conservative tomorrow as those who did not.

- Former Liberal Democrat voters who thought the Conservatives were right on the economy and quite liked David Cameron were two and a half times more likely to say they would vote Conservative if they also thought the Conservative Party shared their values.

Full poll results

CONSERVATIVE VOTERS Poll of 1,502 people who voted Conservative at the 2010 general election; 25 February – 3 March 2011
CONSERVATIVE CONSIDERERS Poll of 2,000 people who considered voting Conservative in 2010 but decided not to; 24 February – 3 March 2011
CONSERVATIVE PARTY MEMBERS Poll of 401 members of the Conservative Party; 4 – 9 March 2011

[CONSIDERERS] Have you ever voted Conservative at a general election?

Yes, I have voted Conservative before	61%
No, I have not	39%

[Con VOTERS] Was this the first time you had voted Conservative in a general election, or had you voted Conservative before?

This was the first time I had voted Conservative in a general election	17%
I had voted Conservative before	83%

- ☐ Those who said they were voting mainly against Labour rather than for the Conservatives were more than twice as likely to be voting Conservative for the first time (23%) as positive Conservative voters (11%).

[Con VOTERS] Was your decision to vote Conservative at the general election more because you had positive views about David Cameron and the Conservatives, or more because you had negative views about Gordon Brown and Labour?

Positive about Conservatives	52%
Negative about Labour	48%

- ☐ First-time Conservative voters had a sharply different view from Conservative voters as a whole. Nearly two thirds (65%) of those who had not voted Conservative before said their decision was mainly due to negative views about Labour rather than positive views of the Conservatives.

[Con MEMBERS] Thinking about people who voted Conservative at the general election in May 2010, do you think most of them did so mainly because they had positive views about David Cameron and the Conservative Party, or mainly because they had negative views about Gordon Brown and Labour?

Positive about Conservatives	43%
Negative about Labour	57%

[Con VOTERS] Some people have said that even though they voted Conservative, they had some reservations or concerns about doing so. If you had any such concerns, please say what they were. [Open-ended]

Whether they would keep their promises/could be trusted	15%
Lack of experience of government among DC and other leading figures	9%
Other doubts about DC	9%
Potential scale and impact of spending cuts	7%
Would look after the rich/upper/middle classes, not working class/vulnerable people	7%
Nothing much would change/not strong enough to see things through	6%
Return to days of Thatcher/old Tories/had not really changed	5%
Senior Tories too posh/can't understand ordinary people	5%
Not Eurosceptic enough	5%
Would be too right-wing	2%
Was hard to change from always voting for a different party	2%
Would not be tough enough on immigration or welfare	2%

[Con MEMBERS] Some people have said that even though they voted Conservative, they had some reservations or concerns about doing so. Thinking about those who had not voted Conservative at previous elections, what do you think their main reservations would have been about voting Conservative at the general election last May? [Open-ended]

Regarded as party for the rich/middle/upper classes, unsupportive of the working classes	13%
Always voted Labour or for another party and so would feel disloyal	11%
Deficit reduction plans/fear of cuts	10%
Lack of experience/been out of government too long	7%
Cuts in benefit system/welfare state	7%
NHS policies	5%
History/fear of return to the days of Margaret Thatcher/John Major	5%
Thinking David Cameron was young and inexperienced/not a strong leader	5%
Fear of the unknown	4%
Uncertainty about how Conservatives would handle the economy	4%
Doubtful whether the Conservatives would keep their promises	4%
Fear of job cuts/unemployment	4%
Negative press	3%
Immigration	2%
How they would deal with Europe	2%
Prospect of a coalition	2%

[Con VOTERS] Below are some reasons that other people have given for voting Conservative at the 2010 general election. Please can you indicate on a scale of 1 to 10 how important each of these was in your own decision (where 1 means it was not important at all, and 10 means it was extremely important).

[Con MEMBERS] I'm going to read out some reasons that other people have given as to why the Conservative Party scored the highest share of the vote at the 2010 general election. Please can you indicate on a scale of 1 to 10 how important you think each of these issues was in helping to ensure the Conservatives became the largest party (where 1 means it was not important at all, and 10 means it was extremely important)?

	VOTERS' MEAN	MEMBERS' ASSUMED MEAN
They seemed more likely to get the economy back on track	8.64	8.59
It was time for a change from Labour and the Conservatives were the most obvious alternative	8.61	9.04
They seemed more willing to reform welfare to stop scroungers and cut benefit dependency	8.50	8.47
They seemed more willing to cut excessive spending and reduce the deficit	8.49	8.63
They seemed more willing to control immigration	7.95	7.65
I thought David Cameron would make a good Prime Minister	7.68	7.74
They seemed more likely to tackle crime effectively	7.43	7.51
I preferred their policy on Britain's role in the EU	7.01	6.97
They seemed more likely to raise standards in schools	6.99	7.49
They seemed more likely to improve the NHS	6.77	6.76
They seemed more likely to cut taxes for people like me	5.76	6.47

- ☐ For men, the two most important reasons were being more likely to get the economy back on track and being more willing to cut the deficit. For women, the most important reason was to get a change from Labour. First-time Conservative voters also scored this as their main reason.

[Con VOTERS, CONSIDERERS and MEMBERS] Overall, has the coalition government so far been doing better than you expected when it was first formed, or worse than you expected, or about the same as you expected?

	VOTERS	CONSIDERERS	MEMBERS
Better than I expected	26%	25%	33%
About the same as I expected	54%	43%	51%
Worse than I expected	20%	31%	17%

- ☐ Male Con voters were more likely to say the coalition was doing better than they had expected (30%), with only 17% saying it was doing worse. Women were as likely to say it was doing worse as to say it was doing better (both 22%).
- ☐ Male considerers were also more likely than their female counterparts to say the coalition was doing better than they expected (28% v. 23%), and less likely to say it was doing worse (29% v. 34%).
- ☐ First-time Conservative voters were considerably more likely than average to say the coalition was doing worse than they expected (32%). They were also less likely to say it was doing better (22%) and about the same (46%).

[Con VOTERS, CONSIDERERS and MEMBERS] And thinking about David Cameron's performance as Prime Minister, has that been better or worse than you expected when he took office?

	VOTERS	CONSIDERERS	MEMBERS
Better than I expected	27%	29%	34%
About the same as I expected	60%	44%	51%
Worse than I expected	13%	27%	15%

- ☐ As with the coalition as a whole, first-time Conservative voters were more likely than average to say DC's performance had been worse than they expected (22%) – but they were nearly as likely as other Con voters to say it had been better (26%).
- ☐ Male considerers were more likely to say DC was doing better than expected than women (32% v. 25%), and women were more likely than men to say he was doing worse (29% v. 25%).

[Con VOTERS and CONSIDERERS] If you had to choose, which would you prefer to have at the moment: the current Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition, or a Conservative government with an overall majority?

	VOTERS	CONSIDERERS
Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition	25%	64%
Conservative government with an overall majority	75%	36%

- ☐ First-time Conservative voters said they would prefer a Conservative government by a lower margin than other Conservative voters: 65% to 35%.
- ☐ Female considerers preferred the coalition to a Conservative government by 69% to 31%; those who had never voted Conservative preferred it by 70% to 30%.
- ☐ Considerers who said they were now more inclined to consider voting Conservative at the next election also preferred the coalition to a Conservative majority government, but by a lower margin: 58% to 42%.

[Con VOTERS, CONSIDERERS and MEMBERS] Which of the following do you think is the more accurate description of the current coalition government?

	VOTERS	CONSIDERERS	MEMBERS
It is a true coalition where decisions are made jointly and the Liberal Democrats have a substantial influence	22%	14%	31%
It is a coalition led by the Conservatives in which the Liberal Democrats have a say and some influence	67%	57%	55%
It is essentially a Conservative government with some Liberal Democrat window dressing	11%	30%	14%

- ☐ First-time Conservative voters were more than twice as likely to say the coalition was "essentially a Conservative government with some Liberal Democrat window dressing (23%).

[CONSIDERERS] Please can you say in each case whether, on balance, you think the statement is true of (i) the Conservative Party, (ii) the Labour Party, and (iii) the Liberal Democrats.

% saying true of…	CON	LAB	LIB DEMS
Willing to take tough decisions for the long term	**78%**	23%	26%
Competent and capable	**62%**	32%	35%
Will do what they say	**61%**	30%	27%
Shares my values	39%	34%	**48%**
On the side of people like me	37%	36%	**49%**
Its heart is in the right place	35%	40%	**57%**
Represents the whole country, not just some types of people	34%	39%	**48%**
Wants to help ordinary people get on in life	33%	**50%**	**50%**
Stands for fairness	33%	38%	**55%**
Stands for equal opportunity for all	32%	44%	**54%**

- ☐ In all cases, men were more likely to agree that each positive attribute applied to the Conservative Party than women. This was particularly true for "on the side of people like me" (43% of men, 31% of women). This discrepancy did not apply for the other two parties.

[Con VOTERS, CONSIDERERS and MEMBERS] Please can you rate the following people for their performance on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means "terrible" and 10 means "excellent". If you don't know enough about them to have a view either way, please say so.

	VOTERS	CONSIDERERS	MEMBERS
David Cameron, the Prime Minister	7.82	6.04	8.07
William Hague, the Foreign Secretary	7.09	5.64	7.52
Boris Johnson, the Mayor of London	6.72	5.57	7.27
George Osborne, the Chancellor	6.61	5.00	7.05
Theresa May, the Home Secretary	6.46	5.04	6.73
Nick Clegg, the Deputy Prime Minister	6.15	5.28	5.78
Ken Clarke, the Justice Secretary	5.89	5.09	6.09
Vince Cable, the Business Secretary	5.58	5.09	5.33
Ed Balls, the Shadow Chancellor	3.48	4.27	3.53
Ed Miliband, the Labour leader	3.41	4.27	3.36

[Con VOTERS and CONSIDERES] Who do you most trust to manage the economy in the best interests of Britain, David Cameron and the Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne or Ed Miliband and the Shadow Chancellor Ed Balls?

	VOTERS	CONSIDERERS
David Cameron and George Osborne	96%	74%
Ed Miliband and Ed Balls	4%	26%

- ☐ First-time Conservative voters, and those who said they could see themselves voting Labour some time in the future, both chose DC and GO by 87% to 13%.
- ☐ Male considerers chose DC & GO by a 54-point margin (77% to 23%), compared with a 42-point margin among women.

[Con VOTERS, CONSIDERERS and MEMBERS] Thinking about Britain's economy, which of the following is closest to your own view?

	VOTERS	CONSIDERERS	MEMBERS
Although things are difficult now, the right decisions are being made and things will improve significantly in the next three or four years	87%	62%	89%
In three or four years' time the economy will be no better, or even worse, than it is now	13%	38%	11%

- ☐ Male Conservative voters took the optimistic view by an 80-point margin (90% to 10%); women by 68 points (84% to 16%). Among considerers, men took the optimistic view by a 34-point margin, compared to a 12-point margin among women.
- ☐ Both first-time Conservatives and those who could see themselves voting Labour some time in the future took the optimistic view by 72% to 28%.

[Con VOTERS, CONSIDERERS and MEMBERS] Thinking about the government's proposed cuts in public spending, which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

	VOTERS	CONSIDERERS	MEMBERS
The cuts are too deep and are being made too quickly	21%	46%	14%
The cuts are necessary and unavoidable and are the right thing for the economy	70%	46%	74%
The cuts do not go far enough – the government should do more to reduce public spending	9%	8%	12%

- ☐ Female Conservative voters (26%) were more likely than men (15%) to say the cuts were too deep and too quick. Men (13%) were more than twice as likely as women (6%) to say they do not go far enough.
- ☐ Among considerers, women thought the cuts were too deep and quick rather than necessary and unavoidable by 50% to 43%. Men thought they were necessary and unavoidable by 49% to 42%.
- ☐ First-time Conservatives were twice as likely to say the cuts were too deep and too quick (42%), and only just over half (54%) said they were necessary and unavoidable.

[CONSIDERERS who say the cuts are too deep and too quick] You say the government is cutting spending too deeply and too quickly. Which of the following do you think is the best explanation for why they are doing this?

The government is hostile to public services and the public sector, and is using the deficit as an excuse to make big cuts	35%
The government wants all the pain to happen in the first few years, so that by the time of the next election they can claim things are improving	34%
The government believes it is doing the right thing for the economy	31%

- ☐ Among those who say they are now more likely to consider voting Conservative next time, 68% say they think the government believes it is doing the right thing. 46% of those who are now less likely to consider the Conservatives say the government is hostile to public services.

[Con VOTERS, CONSIDERERS and MEMBERS]

[SPLIT SAMPLE A] Please say whether *you* regard each of the following as a very high priority, a high priority, a medium priority, a quite low priority, or a very low priority – bearing in mind that governments cannot make everything a high priority.

[SPLIT SAMPLE B] Please say whether you think *the Conservative Party today* regards each of the following as a very high priority, a high priority, a medium priority, a quite low priority, or a very low priority – bearing in mind that governments cannot make everything a high priority.

CON VOTERS **Very high priority + high priority**	**FOR ME**	**FOR THE CONSERVATIVES**	**PRIORITY GAP**
1. Getting the economy growing and creating jobs	97%	87%	+10%
2. Cutting the deficit and the debt	92%	95%	-3%
3. Reforming welfare to stop scroungers and cut benefit dependency	88%	88%	0%
4. Controlling immigration	83%	62%	+21%
5. Dealing with crime	82%	53%	+29%
6. Standing up for Britain in the EU	77%	53%	+24%
7. Improving the NHS	74%	60%	+14%
8. Scrapping unnecessary rules and regulations	68%	49%	+19%
9. Improving schools	65%	53%	+12%
10. Cutting the size of the state	47%	47%	0%
11. Cutting taxes	39%	25%	+14%
12. Supporting marriage through the tax system	38%	26%	+12%
13. Protecting the environment	31%	19%	+12%

- ☐ Women (82%) were considerably more likely to name the NHS as one of their own high or very high priorities than men (65%).
- ☐ First-time Conservative voters were more likely than previous Conservative voters to name the NHS as one of their own high or very high priorities (86% v 72%), as they were for the environment (38% v 29%). Previous Conservative voters were more likely than first-timers to prioritise standing up for Britain in the EU (80% v 65%).

CONSIDERERS **Very high priority + high priority**	**FOR ME**	**FOR THE CONSERVATIVES**	**PRIORITY GAP**
1. Getting the economy growing and creating jobs	94%	71%	23%
2. Cutting the deficit and the debt	83%	87%	-4%
3. Reforming welfare to stop scroungers and cut benefit dependency	79%	79%	0%
4. Dealing with crime	79%	43%	46%
5. Improving the NHS	75%	42%	33%
6. Controlling immigration	71%	49%	22%
7. Standing up for Britain in the EU	66%	44%	22%
8. Improving schools	67%	35%	32%
9. Scrapping unnecessary rules and regulations	62%	41%	21%
10. Cutting taxes	48%	26%	22%
11. Protecting the environment	45%	23%	22%
12. Cutting the size of the state	39%	45%	-6%
13. Supporting marriage through the tax system	32%	30%	2%

- ☐ 84% of female considerers rated the NHS as a high or very high priority, putting it second for them behind getting the economy growing.

MEMBERS Very high priority + high priority	FOR ME	FOR THE CONSERVATIVES	PRIORITY GAP
1. Getting the economy growing and creating jobs	96%	85%	11%
2. Cutting the deficit and the debt	90%	90%	0%
3. Reforming welfare to stop scroungers and cut benefit dependency	88%	85%	3%
4. Dealing with crime	80%	49%	31%
5. Controlling immigration	79%	55%	24%
6. Scrapping unnecessary rules and regulations	76%	62%	14%
7. Standing up for Britain in the EU	76%	57%	19%
8. Improving schools	73%	57%	16%
9. Improving the NHS	69%	60%	9%
10. Cutting the size of the state	49%	47%	2%
11. Supporting marriage through the tax system	40%	36%	4%
12. Protecting the environment	36%	24%	12%
13. Cutting taxes	34%	25%	9%

[Con VOTERS, CONSIDERERS and MEMBERS] If we had a Conservative government with an overall majority instead of a coalition between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats, do you think that each of the following would be handled better, or worse, or no different?

CON VOTERS	BETTER WITH MAJORITY	NO DIFFERENT	WORSE WITH MAJORITY
Getting the economy growing and creating jobs	43%	52%	5%
Cutting the deficit and the debt	49%	47%	4%
Reforming welfare to stop scroungers and cut benefit dependency	59%	36%	4%
Controlling immigration	59%	36%	5%
Dealing with crime	41%	55%	4%
Standing up for Britain in the EU	54%	40%	6%
Improving the NHS	28%	63%	9%
Scrapping unnecessary rules and regulations	46%	49%	5%
Improving schools	28%	64%	8%
Cutting the size of the state	39%	57%	4%
Cutting taxes	28%	61%	11%
Supporting marriage through the tax system	35%	59%	6%
Protecting the environment	15%	68%	17%

☐ On all issues, first-time Conservative voters were more likely than Conservative voters as a whole to say the issue would be handled worse by a Conservative government with an overall majority.

CONSIDERERS	BETTER WITH MAJORITY	NO DIFFERENT	WORSE WITH MAJORITY
Getting the economy growing and creating jobs	23%	57%	20%
Cutting the deficit and the debt	31%	54%	15%
Reforming welfare to stop scroungers and cut benefit dependency	37%	49%	14%
Dealing with crime	23%	63%	14%
Improving the NHS	13%	60%	27%
Controlling immigration	33%	50%	17%
Standing up for Britain in the EU	30%	55%	15%
Improving schools	14%	61%	25%
Scrapping unnecessary rules and regulations	25%	58%	17%
Cutting taxes	17%	56%	27%
Protecting the environment	11%	59%	30%
Cutting the size of the state	23%	61%	16%
Supporting marriage through the tax system	21%	64%	15%

- ☐ On all issues except improving schools, male considerers were significantly more likely than women to say the issue would be better handled by a Conservative majority government.

MEMBERS	BETTER WITH MAJORITY	NO DIFFERENT	WORSE WITH MAJORITY
Getting the economy growing and creating jobs	59%	39%	1%
Cutting the deficit and the debt	64%	33%	2%
Reforming welfare to stop scroungers and cut benefit dependency	68%	29%	2%
Dealing with crime	53%	44%	2%
Controlling immigration	66%	30%	3%
Scrapping unnecessary rules and regulations	61%	37%	1%
Standing up for Britain in the EU	70%	25%	4%
Improving schools	44%	52%	3%
Improving the NHS	38%	57%	3%
Cutting the size of the state	55%	34%	3%
Supporting marriage through the tax system	48%	45%	2%
Protecting the environment	24%	63%	12%
Cutting taxes	47%	48%	4%

[Con VOTERS and MEMBERS] Some people say they could never see themselves voting Labour / Liberal Democrat / UKIP under any circumstances, while others say they could see themselves doing so sometime in the future. Which is closer to your own view?

	VOTERS		MEMBERS	
	COULD	COULD NOT	COULD	COULD NOT
Labour	26%	74%	9%	91%
Liberal Democrats	42%	58%	19%	81%
UKIP	36%	64%	35%	65%

- ☐ More than half of first-time Conservatives (54%) said they could see themselves voting Labour sometime in the future, compared to 20% of previous Conservative voters.
- ☐ 50% of first-time Conservatives could see themselves voting Lib Dem, compared to 41% of previous Conservative voters.
- ☐ Previous Conservative voters (37%) were more likely to say they could see themselves voting for UKIP than first-time Conservative voters (31%).

[Con VOTERS and CONSIDERERS] If at the next election there were a single candidate standing for the coalition, rather than separate candidates for the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats, which of the following comes closest to your view:

	VOTERS	CONSIDERERS
I would be more likely to vote for a joint coalition candidate than for a Conservative candidate	16%	61%
I would be more likely to vote for a Conservative candidate than for a joint coalition candidate	84%	39%

- ☐ First-time Conservatives were much more likely than average to say they would be more likely to vote for a joint coalition candidate than for a Conservative (29%).
- ☐ Female considerers were more likely to say they would rather vote for a joint coalition candidate than a Conservative candidate (65%) than men (57%). 67% of those who had never voted Conservative said they would rather vote for a coalition candidate, compared to 56% of those who had voted Conservative.

	VOTERS	CONSIDERERS
I would be more likely to vote for a joint coalition candidate than for a Liberal Democrat candidate	86%	58%
I would be more likely to vote for a Liberal Democrat candidate than for a joint coalition candidate	14%	42%

- ☐ First-time Conservative voters preferred a joint coalition candidate to a Liberal Democrat by 72% to 28%.

[Con MEMBERS] If at the next election there were a single candidate standing for the coalition, rather than separate candidates for the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats, how do you think you would vote… if the candidate were a member of the Conservative Party/if the candidate were a member of the Liberal Democrats?

	IF COALITION CANDIDATE IS CONSERVATIVE	IF COALITION CANDIDATE IS LIB DEM
Coalition candidate	84%	50%
UKIP	3%	16%
Labour	1%	2%
Other	7%	19%
Don't know	3%	8%

[Con VOTERS and CONSIDERERS] Since the general election, would you say your view of the Conservative Party has changed for the better, or for the worse, or has it not changed at all?

	VOTERS	CONSIDERERS	MEMBERS
My view of the Conservative Party has changed for the better	23%	25%	21%
My view of the Conservative Party has not changed at all	61%	48%	63%
My view of the Conservative Party has changed for the worse	16%	27%	15%

- ☐ One third of first-time Conservatives said their view of the party had changed for the better, compared to 21% of previous Conservative voters. 19% of first-timers said their view had changed for the worse, compared to 15% of previous Conservative voters.

[Con VOTERS who said their view of the party had changed for the better] You said your view of the Conservative Party had changed for the better since the election. Please could you say briefly why this is? [Open-ended]

Delivering promises/getting things done/sorting out the mess/taking tough decisions	26%
Sorting out the economy/deficit	14%
Dealing well with the coalition/prepared to work with other parties	13%
Listening/open/honest/prepared to admit mistakes and change course	14%
Performance of David Cameron	10%
Not too right wing/showed have changed/more human face/for everyone	7%
Breath of fresh air/new direction/doing right long term things for country	4%
Doing something about immigration and scroungers	4%
Performing better/being more radical than expected	4%
Good overall performance in government	4%

[CONSIDERERS who said their view of the party had changed for the better] You said your view of the Conservative Party had changed for the better since the election. Please could you say briefly why this is? [Open-ended]

Doing what they promised/taking tough decisions even when unpopular/sticking to their guns/getting things done	25%
Impressed with David Cameron as Prime Minister	14%
Dealing with the deficit even though difficult	11%
Generally good performance/heading in right direction	11%
Working well in coalition/allowing Lib Dems some influence/prepared to work with other parties	10%
Trying to improve the economy/making right decisions for economy in long run	8%
Different to previous Conservative governments/less dogmatic/surprisingly concerned for everyone	7%
Generally doing better than would have expected	6%
Listening/prepared to admit mistakes	5%
Welfare reform/dealing with scroungers	4%

[Con MEMBERS who said their view of the party had changed for the better] You said your view of the Conservative Party has changed for the better since the election. Please could you say briefly why this is? [Open-ended]

They are getting on with the job/bringing things under control	34%
David Cameron/the party are making tough/unpopular decisions and sticking to them	15%
They have handled working within the confines of a coalition very well	14%
David Cameron/the party are handling the deficit very well	13%
They are clearing up Labour's mess	10%
David Cameron is a good leader/has good control of his party/doing better than expected	11%
They are dealing with the benefits system	6%
They are dealing with immigration issues	5%

[Con VOTERS who said their view of the party had changed for the worse] You say your view of the Conservative Party has changed for the worse since the election. Please could you say briefly why this is?

Cuts are too quick/too deep/made in wrong places/hurting vulnerable	16%
Too many concessions to the Lib Dems/don't like the coalition	13%
Breaking promises/U-turns on pledges	10%
Nothing much is changing/not delivering	6%
Not standing up to EU strongly enough	6%
Weak on immigration	4%
Ordinary hard working people/middle classes being hit hardest/cost of living/fuel	4%
Hasty/ill-thought through decisions followed by retreats, e.g. forests	3%
Not tough enough on crime	3%
Not impressed with David Cameron	3%

[CONSIDERERS who said their view of the party had changed for the worse]

Cuts too quick/too deep/being made in wrong places	30%
Broken promises/untrustworthy/said one thing and doing another	14%
For the rich/big business rather than ordinary/working class/vulnerable	12%
Taxes up/cost of living up/life harder for ordinary people	7%
Nothing is changing/happening/improving	5%
Making mistakes/hasty/short-sighted decisions/blunders that need to be reversed	4%
Government made up of rich individuals who are detached from impact of decisions	4%
Don't listen to the public	3%
Too ideological	3%

[Con MEMBERS who said their view of the party had changed for the worse] You say your view of the Conservative Party has changed for the worse since the election. Please could you say briefly why this is?

Manifesto promises have been broken or diluted	26%
Not tough enough on Europe/broke referendum promise	18%
Letting the Lib Dems have too much say	18%
Cuts to the Armed Forces	16%

[Con VOTERS and CONSIDERERS] Would you say you were moving towards or away from Labour / the Liberal Democrats / the Conservatives?

	VOTERS		CONSIDERERS	
	Towards	**Away**	**Towards**	**Away**
Labour	5%	67%	26%	46%
Liberal Democrats	17%	30%	22%	35%
Conservatives	55%	10%	33%	33%

- ☐ 17% of first-time Conservatives said they were moving towards Labour, and 61% away. Voters who said they could see themselves voting Labour in future were still less likely to be moving towards Labour (18%) than away (54%).
- ☐ First-time voters were nearly as likely as other voters to say they were moving towards the Conservatives (52%) – but also twice as likely as others to say they were moving away (21%).
- ☐ Male considerers said they were moving towards rather than away from the Conservatives by 35% to 31%; women were moving away rather than towards the party by 35% to 30%. 18-24 year-olds were most likely to say they were moving away (44%). Those who had voted Conservative before were more likely to say they were moving towards the party (37%) than those who had not (27%).
- ☐ Younger considerers were more likely to say they were moving towards Labour (38% of 18-24s, 37% of 25 to 34s, 34% of 35 to 44s).
- ☐ 18-24 year-old considerers were the most likely to say they were moving away from the Liberal Democrats (42%).

[CONSIDERERS] Thinking about the performance of David Cameron and the Conservative Party in government, do you think you will be more likely to consider voting Conservative at the next election, or less likely, or has it made no difference?

I will be more likely to consider voting Conservative than I was before	31%
I will be no more or less likely to consider voting Conservative than I was before	40%
I will be less likely to consider voting Conservative than I was before	29%

- ☐ Male considerers said they were more rather than less likely to consider voting Conservative by 33% to 26%; women said they were less rather than more likely, by 32% to 28%.
- ☐ 44% of 18-24s said they were now less likely to consider voting Conservative, the highest proportion of any group.

[Con VOTERS and CONSIDERERS] The next general election is expected to be in May 2015. Though it is still very early to judge, given what you know about the coalition government's performance so far, and what you expect it to do in the future, and what the other parties are saying or doing, which of the following would you most like to see as the outcome of the next election?

	VOTERS	CONSIDERERS
A Conservative government	74%	31%
A coalition between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats	17%	31%
A coalition between Labour and the Liberal Democrats	4%	13%
A Labour government	6%	25%

- ☐ 60% of first-time Conservative voters said they would prefer a Conservative government, and 18% another Con-Lib Dem coalition. More than a fifth said they would like to see a Labour-Lib Dem coalition (9%) or a Labour government (13%).
- ☐ Those who said they could see themselves voting UKIP sometime in the future were more likely than average to say they would like to see a Conservative government.
- ☐ Male considerers were more likely to want to see a Conservative government (36%) than female considerers.
- ☐ 33% of those who had never voted Conservative wanted to see a Labour government, compared to 19% of those who had. Only 21% of those who had never voted Conservative wanted to see a Conservative government, compared to 38% of those who had.

[Con VOTERS and CONSIDERERS] Taking everything into account, including the performance of the coalition, the other parties, and your MP and the candidates in your local area, which party do you think you are most likely to end up voting for at the next general election?

	VOTERS	CONSIDERERS
Conservative	79%	22%
Labour	3%	21%
Liberal Democrat	2%	23%
Another party	3%	10%
Won't vote	1%	1%
Don't know	11%	23%

- ☐ Among those naming a party, the figures for Conservative voters are Con 90%, Lab 3%, Lib Dem 2%, Others 3%. For considerers, the figures are Con 29%, Lab 28%, Lib Dems 30%, Others 13%.
- ☐ 57% of first-time Conservatives said they would probably vote for the party at the next election, and 11% for Labour. 21% said they didn't know.
- ☐ 69% of Con voters who said their vote was mainly to do with negative views of Labour said they would probably vote Conservative next time, compared to 89% of those who said theirs was a positive vote for the Conservatives.
- ☐ Only 12% of Con voters who said they could see themselves voting Labour sometime in the future, and 4% of those who could see themselves voting Lib Dem, thought they would probably end up voting for these parties next time.
- ☐ Male considerers were more likely to say they would probably vote Conservative (24%) than women (20%). Likelihood to vote Conservative was highest among ABs (28%) and lowest among 24-34s (17%).
- ☐ 28% of considerers who had voted Conservative before said they would probably vote Conservative next time, compared to 14% of those who had not.
- ☐ Of the considerers who had said they were more *likely* to consider voting Conservative next time, only 59% said they would probably do so. 18% said 'don't know', and 16% said they would probably vote Lib Dem.

[Con MEMBERS] What is the one thing the Conservative Party could say or do that would be most likely to attract the support of people who didn't vote Conservative at the last general election?

Improve the economy/reduce unemployment/create jobs/reduce the deficit	19%
Get us out of the EU/take tougher line on Europe/hold referendum on Europe	17%
Deal with immigration issues	13%
Cut taxes	9%
Communicate ideas clearly	7%
Be honest/open/transparent	5%
Keep manifesto promises	4%
Reform the benefits system/welfare state	3%
Review the Human Rights Act	2%
Tackle crime/law and order	2%
Improve the NHS	2%