

## Central Statistics and Research Branch (CSRB) - Transport Statistics Users Group (TSUG) Readership Survey, 2010

### Background

The Transport Statistics Users Group (TSUG) met for the first time in January 2010. TSUG provides a forum for the producers and users of transport statistics to exchange views on all issues pertaining to transport statistics and their production and dissemination. The overall aim is to ensure that all statistical outputs/products are relevant, timely and of sufficient quality to meet current and future user needs. Current membership of the TSUG includes statisticians from the Central Statistics Research Branch (CSRB) and various policy colleagues from the transport and regional development divisions/ branches within the Department for Regional Development (DRD) and Department of Environment (DoE), with a view to include external members as the group evolves. The first action point arising from the TSUG meeting was to commission a readership survey on all current transport publications produced by CSRB in order to assess their usefulness to readers in their current format and identify areas for improvement/future development, dependent on staff and financial resources. The Group also recognised that the survey would provide valuable information on external user needs in lieu of securing external representation on TSUG itself.

A copy of the readership survey questionnaire is contained in Appendix A (page 9). The questionnaire asks readers to comment on the three existing transport publications produced by CSRB. These are the *Northern Ireland Road and Rail Bulletin* (Quarterly), the *Northern Ireland Transport Statistics* (Annual) and the *Travel Survey for Northern Ireland* (Annual), which can be accessed from the following link <http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/statistics/stats-catagories.htm>.

Questions assessed the main purpose of each publication, the usefulness of the data topics contained within each publication, additional topics of interest, preferred data presentation styles and the timeliness of each publication. In total, 162 electronic and hardcopies of the survey questionnaire were sent to various policy colleagues, private organisations and independent readers whose details are held on the CSRB statistical transport publications circulation database although not all customers use all of the

publications. Despite issuing a reminder letter, only 22 responses were received, representing a 14% return rate, but it should be noted that the majority of all returns represented the organisational rather than the individual view. In addition, the aim of the survey was to gain some insight into the needs of users and it could be argued that those who took the trouble to respond are most concerned with the future development of the publications and hence their views should be afforded due weight. Eight, 6 and 3 respondents indicated that they would use the publications at least once a month, once every 3 months and once over a 6 month period, respectively. In any event, publications will not be changed without first consulting on the proposed changes with the entire user base.

The following report summarises the main findings of the readership survey, with a distinct results section for each publication. Individual question result tables are presented in Appendix B (page 16).

### **Section 1. Northern Ireland Road and Rail (Quarterly) Publication**

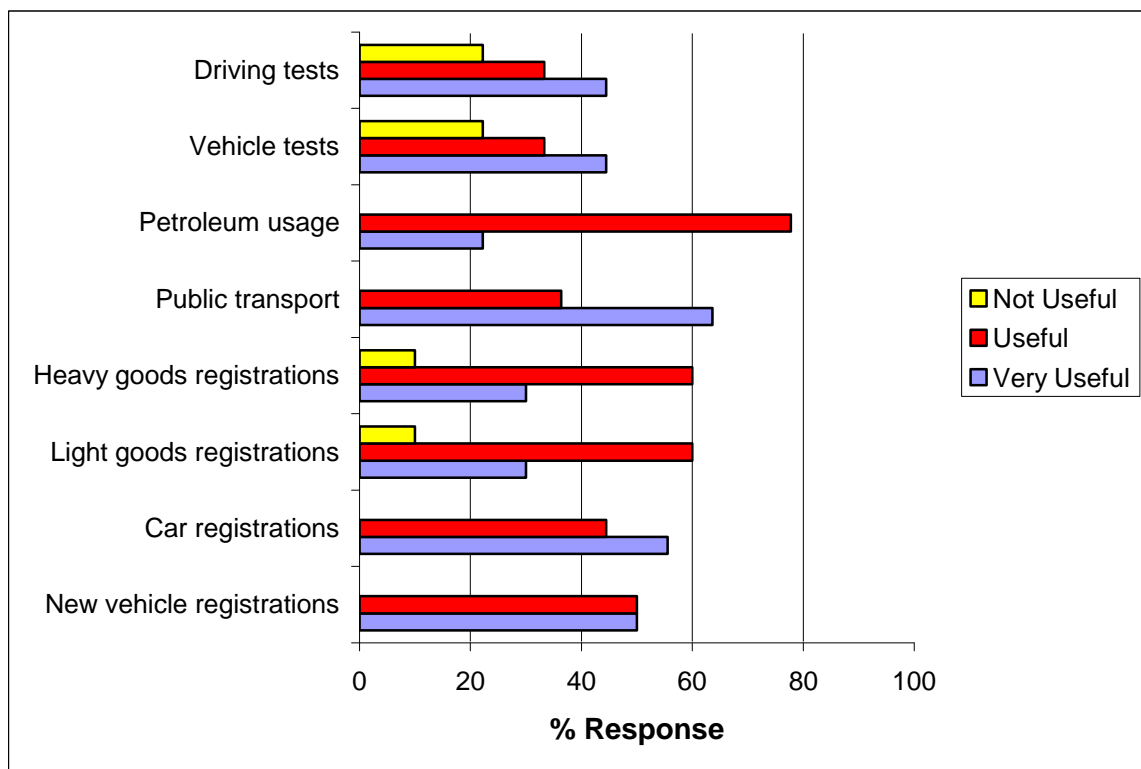
In total 22 responses were received, with 12 (55%) readers using the Northern Ireland Road and Rail (Quarterly) Publication. Table 1 summarises the responding readers by their work area and respondent capacity. The most popular use for the quarterly publication was equally for research (33%) and general interest (33%), followed by policy development (17%) and briefing (17%).

**Table 1 Summary of readers by their work area and respondent capacity.**

	Respondent Capacity		
	Individual Level	Organisational Level	Total
<b>User Type</b>			
Non-Government	2	2	4
Government	4	4	8
<b>Total</b>	6	6	12

A summary of how useful the 12 respondents found the individual data topics contained within the quarterly bulletin is presented in Figure 1. All 12 respondents did not award a rating to each individual topic, as a result the percentage rating response for each individual topic is provided, rather than the number. It was noted that some readers who had indicated various data topics as not useful to them were unlikely to have a key business use for these statistics in their work area. Suggested data topics for inclusion in future reports were route breakdowns for bus and rail routes, fuel prices and vehicle emissions data.

**Figure 1. Summary of percentage (%) rating for the individual data topics contained within the quarterly report.**



The most preferred format of data presentation was tabular. Joint second most popular were graphs/charts and trends. Commentary was the third most popular data style, with sub-regional presentation of data the least popular. No other data format style was suggested in preference to the above styles.

Readers were asked if they would be in favour of an online version of the current quarterly publication in which only key datasets are updated, but on a more regular

basis with limited commentary, but increased trend information. Ten out of 12 readers (83%) were in favour of this. Responding readers identified vehicle registrations, public transport, number of journeys by private car, vehicle emissions and driver and vehicle testing information as the key datasets they would like to see included in an online version of the report, as well as data trend lines for the past 5 years, rather than comparisons with the corresponding quarter in the previous year. Eleven respondents indicated their preferred frequency of publication, with 3 and 8 readers preferring monthly and quarterly publications times, respectively.

## **Section 2. Northern Ireland Transport Statistics (Annual) Publication**

Eighteen out of the total 22 (82%) respondents read the Northern Ireland Transport Statistics (Annual) Publication. A summary of the responding readers by their work area and respondent capacity is provided in Table 2. The most popular uses for the publication were research (33%), general interest (28%) and policy development (22%), with three respondents using the publication for briefing and other, respectively.

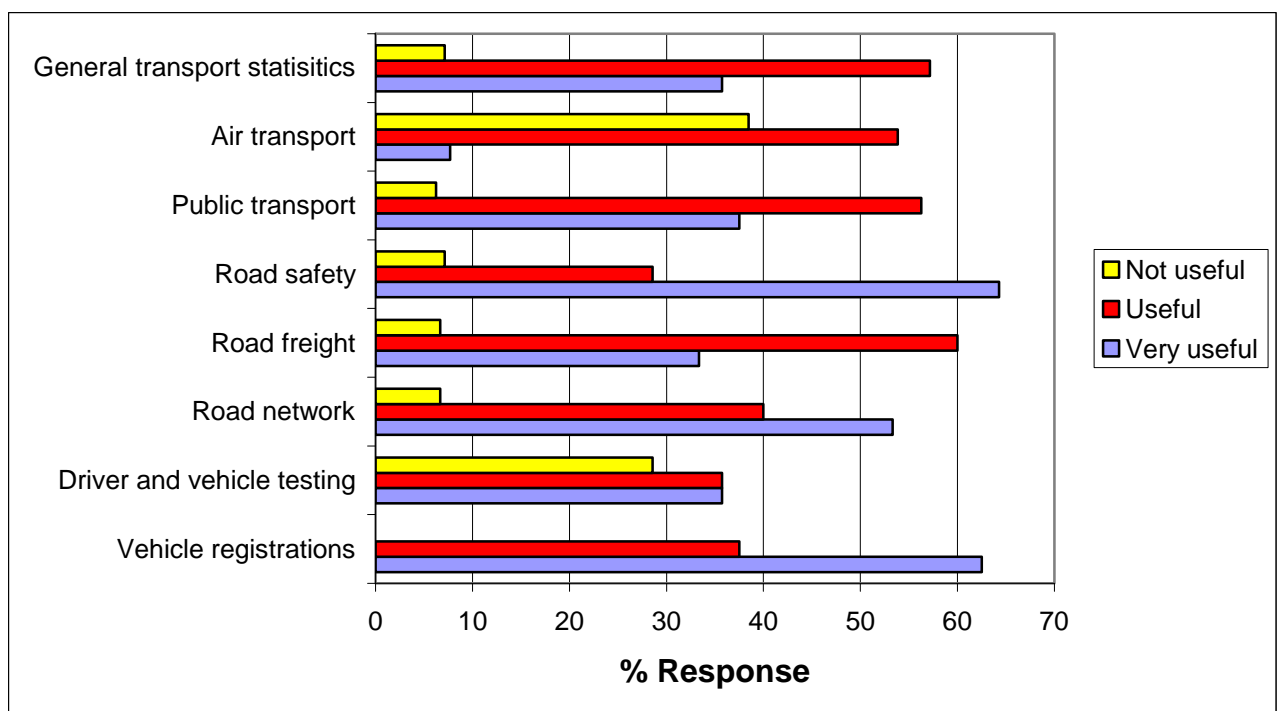
**Table 2 Summary of readers by their work area and respondent capacity.**

	Respondent Capacity		
	Individual Level	Organisational Level	Total
<b>User Type</b>			
Non-Government	2	2	4
Government	8	6	14
<b>Total</b>	10	8	18

A summary of how useful the 18 respondents found the individual data topics contained within the Transport Statistics Annual is presented in Figure 2. Similar to the quarterly publication, all 18 respondents did not award a rating to each individual topic, as a result the percentage rating response for each individual topic is provided, rather than the number. Again, similar to the quarterly publication it was noted that some readers who had indicated various data topics as not useful to them were unlikely to have a key business use for these statistics in their work area.

Data topics that readers would like to see included in the Transport Statistics Annual include average bus speeds/journey time, closer comparison between Northern Ireland (NI) and Great Britain (GB) data, breakdown of vehicle stocks similar to Republic of Ireland (RoI) vehicle reports, number of journeys by private car, percentage of cars used for school run, vehicle emission data and trend data showing the total number of licensed vehicles on NI roads relative to the total number of people killed/injured in road accidents.

**Figure 2 Summary of % rating for individual data topics contained within the Transport Statistics Annual report.**



Tabular data presentation was the most popular format with responding readers. Graphs/Charts were the second most popular, followed by trends and commentary, respectively. Sub-regional presentation of data was the least popular. No other preferred format of data presentation was specified.

### **Section 3. Travel Survey for Northern Ireland (Annual) Publication**

Ten out of the 22 (45%) respondents used the Travel Survey for Northern Ireland Publication. Table 3 summarises the responding readers by their work area and respondent capacity. The most popular use for the publication was policy development (50%), with research (20%) and general interest (20%) equally second most popular. One respondent used the publication for briefing.

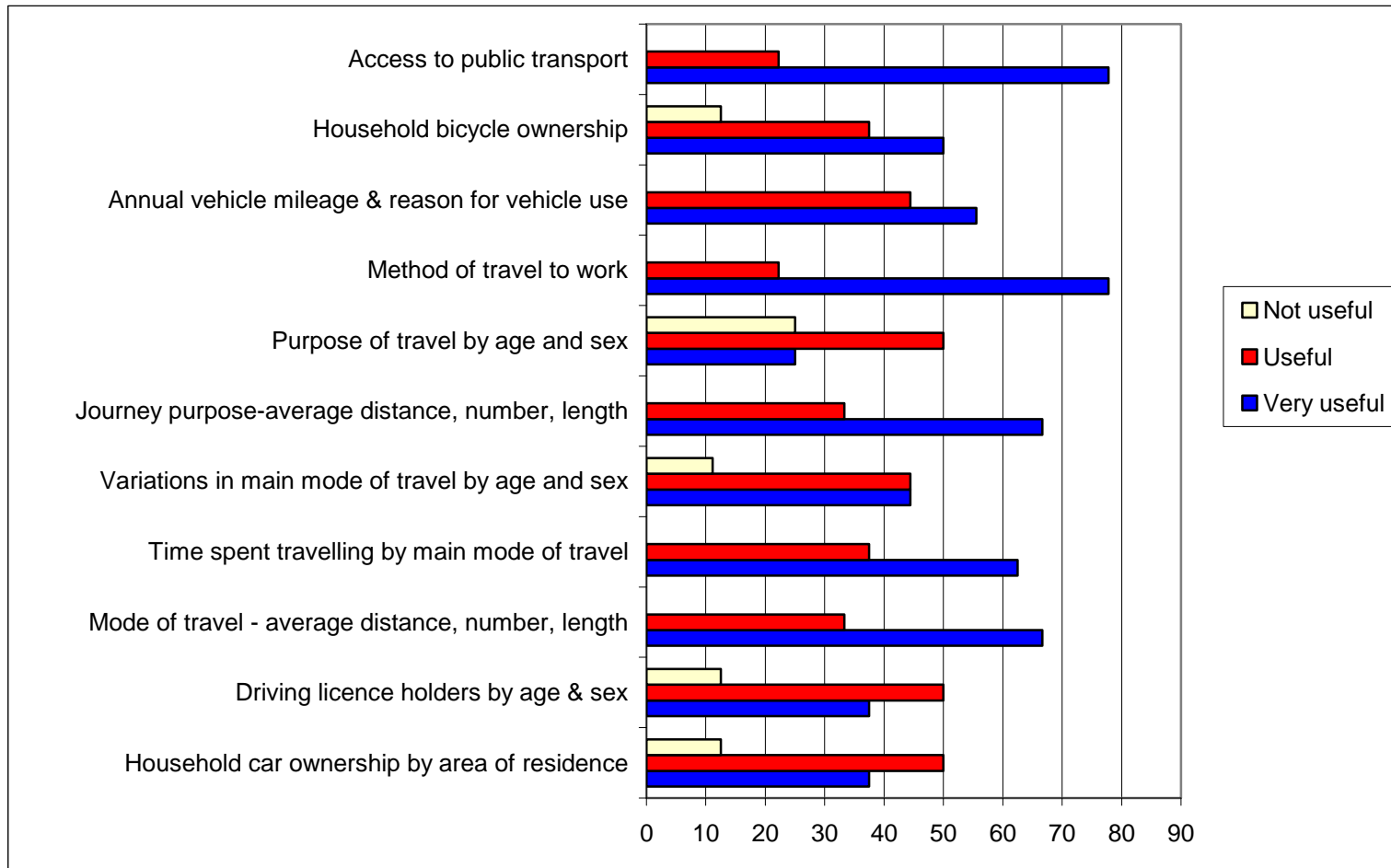
**Table 3 Summary of readers by their work area and respondent capacity.**

	<b>Respondent Capacity</b>		
	<b>Individual Level</b>	<b>Organisational Level</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>User Type</b>			
<b>Non-Government</b>	0	1	1
<b>Government</b>	5	4	9
<b>Total</b>	5	5	10

Figure 3 provides a summary of how useful the 10 readers found the individual breakdowns of data currently contained in the Travel Survey for Northern Ireland. As with the previous publications results are presented as percentage rating for each topic breakdown, as not all 10 readers provided a rating for each individual breakdown. Additional data breakdowns that readers would like to see included are data on school runs, the number of journeys by private car, single car occupancy use and closer comparison between NI and GB data.

Tabular data presentation was the most popular format with responding readers. Graphs/Charts were the second most popular, followed by trends and commentary, respectively. Sub-regional presentation of data was the least popular. No other preferred format of data presentation was specified.

**Figure 3 Summary of % rating for individual data topics contained within the Travel Survey for Northern Ireland report.**



#### **Section 4. Proposed Way Forward**

The next step in this process is to consider the findings of this survey alongside the user needs identified at the first meeting of TSUG and those which will be gathered in a series of more in-depth meetings planned with key users of the TSNI. This will enable proposals to be developed on the format, content and frequency of publication of each of the products and put alongside a longer-term prioritised plan to capture and disseminate new data to meet identified user needs.

The proposals and plan will be discussed and agreed at the next TSUG meeting in the autumn and subsequently issued to users for comment. It is intended that the final plan will be published on the CSRB website with a view to commencing implementation in 2011/12.

## Transport Statistics Publications – Readership Survey

The Central Statistics and Research Branch (CSRB) are interested in your views regarding our transport statistics publications, specifically the **Northern Ireland Road and Rail Bulletin (Quarterly)**, the **Northern Ireland Transport Statistics (Annual)** and the **Travel Survey for Northern Ireland**. We would value your input in completing this short questionnaire. The results will be used to inform the future development, content and format of these publications. Existing and current editions of the three publications can be accessed from the following link: <http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/statistics/stats-categories.htm>

The questionnaire is divided into 3 distinct sections, with each section specific to 1 publication. You will only be asked about publications that you have used and this should take only a few minutes to complete. Please complete this questionnaire by Wednesday, 28th May 2010 and return to [CSRB@drdni.gov.uk](mailto:CSRB@drdni.gov.uk). If you would prefer to print off and complete this questionnaire, please return to CSRB (Survey Return), Room 4-02, Clarence Court, 10-18 Adelaide Street, Belfast, BT2 8GB.

When completing the questionnaire, please double click on the appropriate check box and select the 'Checked' option.

### Section 1 **Northern Ireland Road and Rail Bulletin (Quarterly)**

1. Do you use the **Northern Ireland Road and Rail Bulletin**?

- Yes  → Go to Question 2  
No  → Go to Question 9

2. What is main purpose that you use the **Northern Ireland Road and Rail Bulletin** for?  
(Tick one box)

1. Briefing   
2. Policy development / review   
3. Research   
4. General interest   
5. Other (please specify below)

Please specify what other use you have for the NI Road and Rail:

3. Please indicate how useful you find the data presented on each topic currently contained in the quarterly bulletin by ticking the box which best reflects your view on that data topic:

	Very useful	Useful	Not useful
a. New vehicle registrations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Car registrations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Light goods registrations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Heavy goods registrations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Public Transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Petroleum usage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Vehicle tests	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Driving tests	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Are there any topics or additional breakdowns that you would like to see included that are not currently part of the report?

5. Please rank in order of importance from 1 (the most useful) to 5 (the least useful) your preferred type of output/data presentation

Tables	<input type="checkbox"/>
Graphs/Charts	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trends	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sub-regional (e.g. Local Government Districts)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commentary	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please specify any other output/data presentation styles you would like to see:

6. Would you be in favour of an online version of this publication in which only key datasets are updated, but on a more regular basis with limited commentary, but increased trend information?

Yes  → Go to Question 7

No  → Go to Question 9

7. Please specify the key datasets you would prefer to be included:

8. Please specify your preferred time frame for publication (note that not all data may be available on a more regular basis):

Monthly       Every 2 months       Quarterly

**Section 2 Northern Ireland Transport Statistics (Annual)**

9. Do you use the **Northern Ireland Transport Statistics Annual** publication?

Yes  → Go to Question 10

No  → Go to Question 14

10. What is the main purpose that you use the **Northern Ireland Transport Statistics** publication for: (Tick one box)

- 1. Briefing
- 2. Policy development / review
- 3. Research
- 4. General interest
- 5. Other (please specify below)

Please specify what other use you have for the NI Transport Statistics Annual:

11. Please indicate how useful you find the data presented on each topic currently contained in the annual by ticking the box which best reflects your view on that data topic:

	Very useful	Useful	Not useful
a. Vehicle registrations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Driver and Vehicle testing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Road Network	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Road Freight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Road Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Public Transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Air Transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. General Transport Statistics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. Are there any topics or additional breakdowns that you would like to see included that are not currently part of the report?

13. Please rank in order of importance from 1 (the most useful) to 5 (the least useful) your preferred type of output/data presentation

Tables	<input type="checkbox"/>
Graphs/ Charts	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trends	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sub-regional (e.g. Local Government Districts)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commentary	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please specify any other output/data presentation styles you would like to see:

**Section 3 Travel Survey for Northern Ireland**

14. Do you use the **Travel Survey for Northern Ireland** publication?

- Yes  —————> Go to Question 15  
 No  —————> Go to Question 19

15. What is the main purpose that you use the **Travel Survey for Northern Ireland** publication for: (Tick one box)

1. Briefing   
 2. Policy development / review   
 3. Research   
 4. General interest   
 5. Other (please specify below)

Please specify what other use you have for the NI Travel Survey:
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16. Please indicate how useful you find the breakdowns of data currently contained in the **Travel Survey for Northern Ireland** publication by ticking the box which best reflects your view:

	Very useful	Useful	Not useful
a. Household car ownership by area of residence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Driving licence holders by age and sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Mode of travel – average distance, journey number, journey length	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Time spent travelling by main mode of travel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Variations in main mode of travel by age and sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Journey purpose - average distance, journey number, journey length	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Purpose of travel by age and sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Method of travel to work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Annual vehicle mileage and reason for vehicle use	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Household bicycle ownership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Access to public transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17. Are there any topics or additional breakdowns that you would like to see included that are not currently part of the report?

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18. Please rank in order of importance from 1 (the most useful) to 5 (the least useful) your preferred type of output/data presentation

- Tables
- Graphs/ Charts
- Trends
- Sub-regional (e.g. Local Government Districts)
- Commentary

Please specify any other output/data presentation styles you would like to see:

19. Please use the box below if have any other comments on the publications or transport statistics in general:

**Thank you very much for your contribution. We will keep you informed of any changes which we shall make as a result of this consultation. In order to help inform our analysis we would be grateful if you would provide some information about you and/or your organisation.**

**In what capacity are you responding to this survey?** Individual   
Organisation

**What type of user would best describe you?** Government  Non-Government

**Please enter the name of your organisation in the box below (if non-government) or Department and Policy Directorate (if government)**

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**How frequently would you use the publications?**

(Tick one box – first option that applies)

At least once a month	<input type="checkbox"/>
At least once every 3 months	<input type="checkbox"/>
At least once every 6 months	<input type="checkbox"/>
At least once a year	<input type="checkbox"/>
Less than once a year	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do not use at the moment	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Thank you again for your time**

## Appendix B – Details results of survey

### What is the main purpose that you use the following publications for?

	Briefing	Policy Development	Research	General Interest	Other	Total Respondents
<b>Northern Ireland Road and Rail Bulletin</b>	2	2	4	4	0	12
<b>Northern Ireland Transport Statistics</b>	2	4	6	5	1	18
<b>Travel Survey for Northern Ireland</b>	1	5	2	2	0	10

### Please indicate how useful you find the data presented on each topic in the following publications?

	Very useful	Useful	Not useful	Total Respondents
<b>Northern Ireland Road and Rail Bulletin Topics</b>				
New vehicle registrations	5	5	0	10
Car registrations	5	4	0	9
Light goods registrations	3	6	1	10
Heavy goods registrations	3	6	1	10
Public transport	7	4	0	11
Petroleum usage	2	7	0	9
Vehicle tests	4	3	2	9
Driving tests	4	3	2	9
<b>Northern Ireland Transport Statistics Annual Topics</b>				
Vehicle registrations	10	6	0	16
Driver and vehicle testing	5	5	4	14
Road network	8	6	1	15
Road freight	5	9	1	15
Road safety	9	4	1	14
Public transport	6	9	1	16
Air transport	1	7	5	13
General transport statistics	5	8	1	14

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**Please indicate how useful you find the data presented on each topic in the following publications?**

	Very useful	Useful	Not useful	Total Respondents
<b>Travel Survey for Northern Ireland Topics</b>				
Household car ownership by area of residence	3	4	1	8
Driving licence holders by age and sex	3	4	1	8
Mode of travel - average distance, journey number, journey length	6	3	0	9
Time spent travelling by main mode of travel	5	3	0	8
Variations in main mode of travel by age and sex	4	4	1	9
Journey purpose - average distance. Journey number, journey length	6	3	0	9
Purpose of travel by age and sex	1	2	1	4
Method of travel to work	7	2	0	9
Annual vehicle mileage and reason for vehicle use	5	4	0	9
Household bicycle ownership	4	3	1	8
Access to public transport	7	2	0	9

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**Please rank in order of importance from 1 (the most useful) to 5 (the least useful) your preferred type of output/data presentation**

	1	2	3	4	5	Total Respondents
<b>Northern Ireland Road and Rail Bulletin Quarterly</b>						
Tables	7	2	1	0	0	10
Graph/Charts	2	4	3	0	1	10
Trends	2	4	2	2	0	10
Sub-regional	0	0	1	0	8	9
Commentary	0	0	2	7	0	9
<b>Northern Ireland Transport Statistics Annual</b>						
Tables	10	2	2	1	0	15
Graph/Charts	2	7	4	1	0	14
Trends	3	6	4	1	0	14

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Sub-regional	0	0	2	3	9	14
Commentary	1	0	1	9	3	14
<b>Please rank in order of importance from 1 (the most useful) to 5 (the least useful) your preferred type of output/data presentation</b>						
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Total Respondents</b>
<b>Travel Survey for Northern Ireland</b>						
Tables	6	1	1	0	0	8
Graph/Charts	1	4	1	0	1	7
Trends	1	2	3	1	0	7
Sub-regional	0	0	1	1	5	7
Commentary	0	0	1	5	1	7