

Outcome of User Consultation on 'Northern Ireland Transport Statistics' Report

Background

The [Northern Ireland Transport Statistics](#) report is a compendium publication produced by the Analysis, Statistics and Research Branch (ASRB) of the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). It brings together mainly management information on the road network and public transport along with National Statistics and management information on accessible transport in Northern Ireland. The report is published each year around September/October and is produced in accordance with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

Proposal

ASRB statisticians have recently been engaging with key customers on the Northern Ireland Transport Statistics publication and it is clear there is a need for official statistics on public transport. In light of this, ASRB engaged more widely with users of this report to inform our future statistical products and to determine whether focusing resources on the development of official public transport statistics was the optimal way forward.

ASRB statisticians carried out a user engagement consultation seeking views on the cessation of this statistical publication in its current format and on proposals for a new official statistics publication on public transport. ASRB also asked for feedback on the provision/publication of the existing management information. A copy of the questionnaire is included in the Appendix.

Consultation Period

The user consultation opened on the 14 June 2021 and closed on the 9 July 2021.

An email was sent on 14 June 2021 to notify over 100 stakeholders of the purpose of the survey and that it was live for user engagement. A further reminder email was sent out to the same group of people on 5 July, as the Survey was due to close on the Friday of that week (9 July).

In order to capture the views of a wider range of potential users, DfI issued three tweets to notify and remind twitter users of the survey on Citizen Space. An initial notification was tweeted on 14 June and this was retweeted from the NISRA twitter account. A reminder tweet on 5 July was again retweeted by NISRA and finally a reminder was tweeted on 9 July, confirming that the Survey would close that evening at 17:00.

Responses Received

Fifty- four responses were received to the user engagement survey, however only twenty-three respondents were aware of the bulletin and used the information within it; the summary below is based on these responses.

Summary of Responses

According to respondents, the publication is primarily used for:

- 'Policy development/review';
- 'Monitoring/benchmarking';
- 'Personal use'; and
- 'Briefing (e.g. to Ministers/colleagues)'.

The information in the publication is used mainly in the form of tables and figures (96%) followed by the main report and the infographic (both 65%). (Note users could select multiple formats).

Almost half (48%) of respondents currently use the report on an ad hoc basis, with 22% of respondents using it quarterly and 17% using it monthly.

When asked which sections of the report were currently used, the sections with the greatest number of responses were:

- 'Public transport passenger journeys';
- 'Ulsterbus/ Metro/ Glider passenger journeys, bus miles, kilometres and receipts' and;
- 'Road network summary lengths'.

These sections were also the topics that respondents indicated were most needed in the future along with information on travel by mobility status. Almost half (48%) of users said they would need this information quarterly in the future while 35% indicated they would

require information annually. All users stated that they would like future data to be available in the form of tables of data; the majority of users would also like to have a statistical bulletin and infographics.

Overall, 74% of responses were supportive of the proposal to cease production of the NI Transport Statistics in its current format and move to an alternative form of report. Of those respondents who were not supportive, the reasons stated included not having enough knowledge of the new format. However, these respondents would support a new format of publication provided there is still relevant detailed information available, which would allow historical comparisons to be made.

ASRB Response

The responses from this user consultation have been considered along with the feedback provided through meetings and correspondence with key users and the Office for Statistics Regulation. In line with the Code of Practice for Statistics, there is a need to publish Official Statistics on public transport and move away from the publication of management information by Transport statisticians within ASRB. As there is clear support for making this step and no critical reason identified for maintaining this report, ASRB has taken the decision to cease production of this report.

Outcome and Way Forward

The main outcome of this consultation is therefore that the Northern Ireland Transport Statistics bulletin due to be published in Autumn 2021 will be the final report published in this series. ASRB will now work on the development of official statistics on public transport; the content, frequency and format of this output will be informed by this user engagement.

ASRB Transport statisticians are now liaising with Translink on the provision of data to enable official statistics on public transport to be released next year (2022). The responses highlight a continued need for bus and rail passenger journey information so this is likely to be the key focus in the production of new official statistics. There is also an interest in sustainable public transport and an ongoing need for information on Concessionary travel passes (SmartPasses).

There is also demand for statistics on travel by mobility status from the Travel Survey NI – these have been designated as National Statistics and ASRB will continue to publish these tables on the DfI statistics webpage when available from the [Travel Survey NI](#).

Respondents also indicated a future need for the management information currently published on the Road Networks and ASRB are currently liaising with DfI Roads on the most appropriate way to make this information publicly available. Users will be informed through the customer email distribution list and through sign posting on the DfI transport statistics webpage.

Users also demonstrated an interest in statistics for electric vehicles; these statistics are currently published by the [Department for Transport](#) and ASRB are making changes to the DfI transport statistics webpage in order to signpost users to these statistics. The transport statistics page will also include a link to the [Driver and Vehicle Agency statistics](#) as these statistics may be of interest to respondents.

If you would like to be kept informed about our future products then please join our user distribution list by emailing the responsible statistician at the address below.

Contact Details

Responsible statistician: Allan Nesbitt

Address: Analysis, Statistics & Research Branch
 Room 4-13c
 Clarence Court
 10-18 Adelaide Street
 Belfast
 BT2 8GB

Tel: 028 9054 0800 (Text relay prefix 18001)

E-mail: ASRB@nisra.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – User engagement survey

Overview

User Engagement on “Northern Ireland Transport Statistics” publication

The Northern Ireland Transport Statistics publication ([link](#)) presents information on the road network, public transport and accessible transport in Northern Ireland.

Introduction

This statistical report is a compendium publication produced by the Analysis, Statistics and Research Branch (ASRB) of the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). It brings together mainly management information on the road network and public transport along with National Statistics and management information on accessible transport in Northern Ireland. The report is published each year around September/October and is produced in accordance with the Code of Practice for Statistics ([link](#)).

ASRB statisticians have recently been engaging with key customers on the Northern Ireland Transport Statistics publication. It is clear there is a need for official statistics on public transport and ASRB are considering focusing resources on the development of official public transport statistics from Translink’s data. ASRB would therefore like to engage more widely with users of this report.

Why we are consulting

ASRB statisticians would welcome your views on the cessation of this statistical publication in its current format and on proposals for a new official statistics publication on public transport. We also want your views on the provision/publication of the existing management information.

An anonymised summary of the results and the outcome of this user engagement will be published on the DfI website.

The survey should take approximately five minutes to complete.

Annex A User Engagement Survey

1. Are you aware of the statistical publication on Northern Ireland Transport Statistics?

Yes	Please go to Q2
No	No further responses are required

2. Have you used the information within the Northern Ireland Transport Statistics?

Yes	Please go to Q3
No	No further responses are required

3. If your answer was Yes to Q2 ... What do you use the Northern Ireland Transport Statistics publication for (please select all that apply):

Monitoring / benchmarking	
Briefing (eg to Ministers / colleagues)	
Policy development / review	
Programme for Government	
Academic or other research	
Transport modelling/planning	
Media use	
Commercial purposes	
Personal use	
General information	

Other, (please specify below): -

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4. How often do you make use of the Northern Ireland Transport Statistics publication?

Monthly	
Quarterly	
Annually	
Ad hoc	

5. Which sources of Northern Ireland Transport Statistics information do you **use** (please tick all that apply)?

Main Report	
Infographic	
Tables and figures	

Other, (please specify below): -

6. Which of the following chapters / sections from Northern Ireland Transport Statistics do you currently use? And which are you likely to need in the future? (please select all that apply)

Chapter 1: Road Network	Currently Use	Need in the future
Road network summary lengths		
NI public road lengths by Local Government District and DfI Roads division by type of road		
Public expenditure on NI roads		
Chapter 2: Public Transport		
Ulsterbus/ Metro/ Glider vehicle stock and staff		
Ulsterbus/ Metro/ Glider passenger journeys, bus miles, kilometres and receipts		
NI Rail service assets and staff		
NI Rail service passenger journeys, miles, kilometres and receipts		
Public transport passenger journeys		
Chapter 3: Transport and Disability		
Concessionary travel passes (SmartPasses) held and used by older people and people with a disability in Northern Ireland		
Valid Blue Badges held by category of entitlement in Northern Ireland		
Buses and coaches used as Public Service Vehicles - compliance with accessibility regulations		
Railway carriages used as Public Service Vehicles		
Mobility status by age and gender, Northern Ireland		

Chapter 1: Road Network	Currently Use	Need in the future
Travel by mobility status and main mode/ mode, Northern Ireland		
Travel by mobility status and journey purpose, Northern Ireland		

7. If any of the chapters/sections outlined in Question 6 are required in the future, what format would you need this information in: (please select all that apply)

Statistical bulletin	
Management information report with commentary	
Tables of data	
Infographics	
Opendata	

Other, (please specify below): -

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8. Thinking of the information you are likely to use in the future, how often would you need this information updated: -

Annually	
Twice a year	
Quarterly	

Other, (please specify below): -

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9. Would you be supportive of our proposal to cease production of the Northern Ireland Transport Statistics report in its current format and consider alternative ways of meeting user need including the publication of a new official statistics report on public transport?

Yes	
No	

10. Please provide reasons why you support / do not support the proposal to cease the publication: -

11. Please provide any general feedback on the Northern Ireland Transport Statistics report below which will help us to understand and consider your future user needs: -

12. Please provide your contact details below if you are content that ASRB can contact you about your responses: -

Contact details: -	
Name	
Organisation (if applicable)	
Phone	
Email	

Note: - your contact details will only be used in relation to this user engagement and will be deleted once responses are analysed and clarified.

Responses should be returned no later than 9 July 2021

Please return in writing to: Analysis, Statistics & Research Branch
Room 4.13C
Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
Belfast
BT2 8GB

or by email to: ASRB@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Many thanks for your response.