

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT STATISTICS – USER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Background

Analysis, Statistics and Research Branch (ASRB) within DfI are responsible for producing and disseminating a range of Official and National Statistics (OS/NS) relating to the Department's travel and transport functions. This includes road safety and the activities of the Driver Vehicle Agency (DVA).

The main regular publications which ASRB release in these areas are:

- Northern Ireland Transport Statistics (Annual)
- Travel Survey for Northern Ireland (Various - Annual)
- Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy to 2020 Statistical Report (Annual)
- DfI Driver, Vehicle, Operator and Enforcement Statistics (Quarterly/Annual)
- Cycling and Walking to/from Work in Northern Ireland (Biennial)
- Cycling in NI (Biennial)
- Method of Travel to/from School Within Northern Ireland (Annual)
- Penalty Charge Notice Statistics (Quarterly/Annual)

Other publications are released on a periodic or ad-hoc basis. For a full list see:

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/statistics-0>

and;

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/research-0>

User Engagement Consultation

Whilst ASRB maintains regular contact with its internal departmental customers and develops an annual work programme taking account of their needs, formal engagement with its external user base is much less frequent. Aside from periodic readership surveys, the main forum for external engagement has been the Transport Statistics User Group (TSUG), established in 2010, and which meets annually.

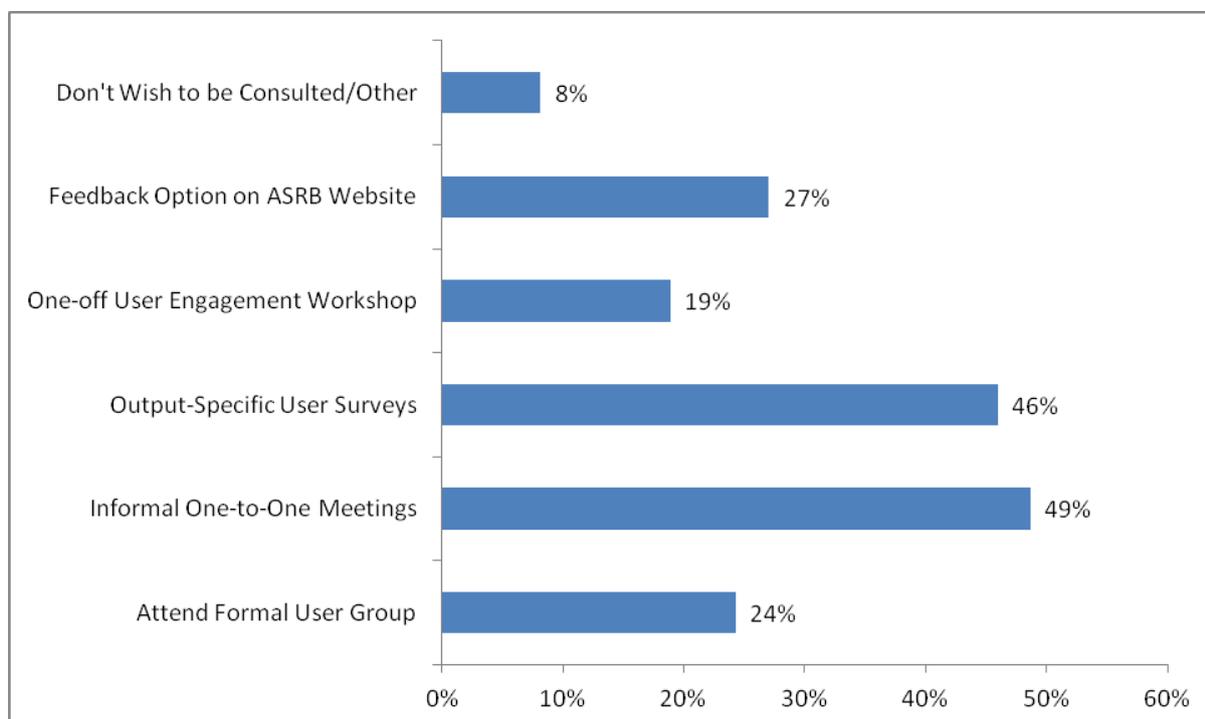
In recent years, it has become apparent that TSUG has become increasingly dominated by internal users. Moreover, the communication at meetings has gradually evolved into briefing users about planned statistical developments rather than being about meaningful two-way engagement. For these reasons, ASRB decided to formally consult with its external and internal user base to establish their preference for future engagement.

The consultation was purposively brief, with a view to maximising response, and was launched via Survey Monkey in Feb '17. It was extended beyond the planned initial 3 month consultation period, with a reminder in order to further encourage response, finally closing in May '17. There were 37 responses received during this period and covered a good mix of internal and external users.

The key findings of the consultation are summarised below.

Results

Fig 1: Preferred Method of Ongoing Contact/Communication with ASRB



Note: respondents could select more than one response

- Approaching half of all respondents expressed a preference for informal one-to-one meetings (or telephone consultations if meetings not feasible) and/or output-specific surveys.
- Only around one-quarter wished to attend formal user group meetings - this was the preferred engagement method for internal users whereas external users were more evenly split between wanting one-to-one meetings versus a more formal user group.
- Just over one-quarter of respondents liked the idea of a feedback option on the ASRB website.
- Other consultation questions revealed that around half of respondents wanted to continue to receive all transport-related publications with the other half preferring a more targeted approach – from this latter group, the Road Safety (76%), Travel Survey (70%) and Driver Vehicle Agency (68%) publications were most in demand followed by Walking & Cycling (51%) and Public Transport (49%).

Future User Engagement Actions

Based on these findings, ASRB propose the following actions:

- **TSUG will be discontinued and members informed;**
- **a planned programme of one-to-one meetings with different types of external users will be arranged annually;**
- **regular meetings with internal customers will continue as part of formal business planning;**
- **readership surveys covering the main branch publications will be conducted on a regular cyclical basis to ensure content and format remains relevant;**
- **Following the first series of external user meetings and annual business planning exercise, a Statement of User Needs will be developed. This will include an action plan and planned timescales for implementation. Any needs which cannot be met in the short to medium term, because of resource or other constraints, will also be flagged. The Statement will be updated annually with new actions and progress on existing actions.**
- **consideration will be given to developing a more prominent and effective feedback facility on ASRB website;**
- **Publication lists will be regularly reviewed to ensure appropriate targeting of publications; and**
- **Branch co-ordinators will be appointed to ensure the new Strategy is fully implemented and maintained.**

**Sept 2017
Analysis Statistics and Research Branch**