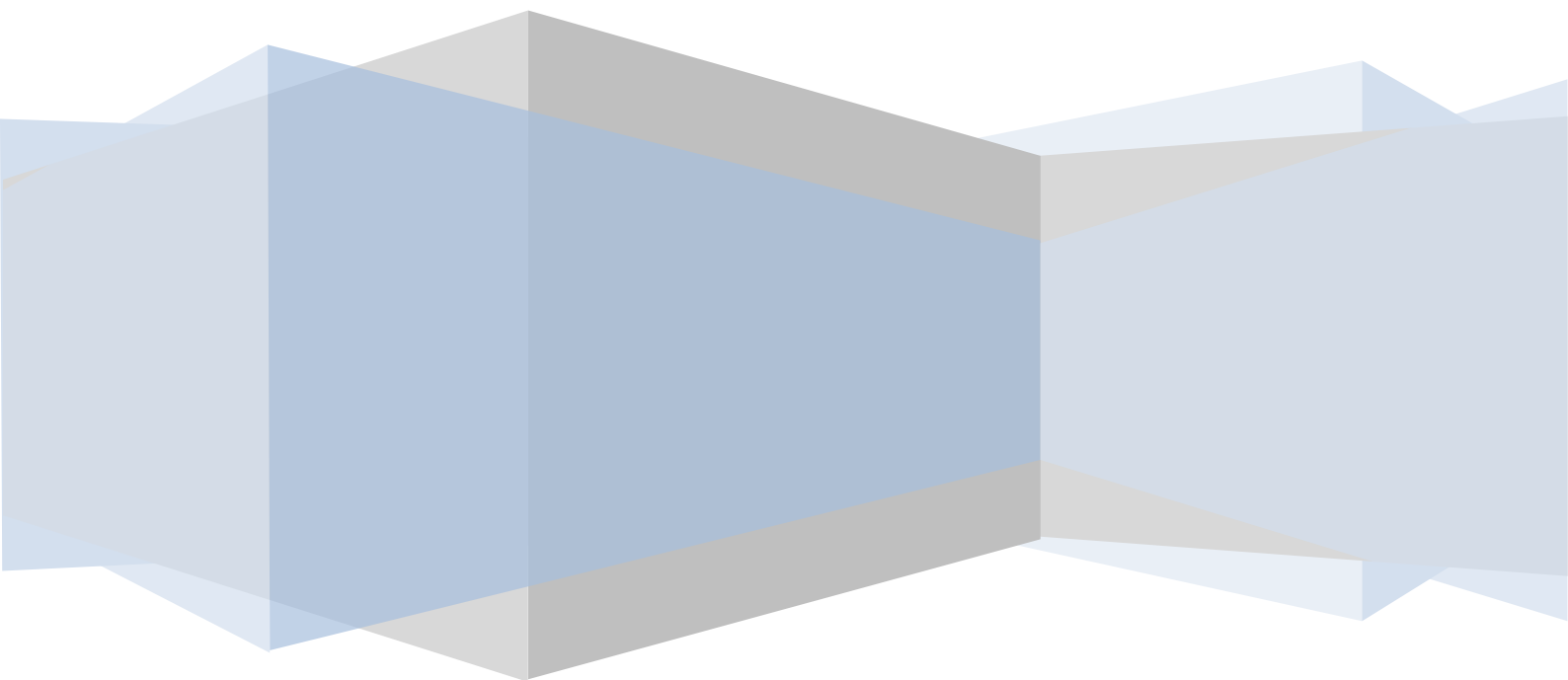




Borders FSB Transport Survey

Data Analysis and Findings, May 2009

Bigbang! Solutions



Scottish Borders FSB Road Transport Survey

Overview

The Borders branch of the Federation of Small Businesses has commissioned a survey to find out how their members are affected by the transport system within the Borders. This includes the road network, the proposed rail route and availability of Public Transport. 703 Borders FSB members were invited to complete the FSB Road Transport Survey; 52% via email and 48% by post. Of these 89 responses were returned. The following analysis is based on these responses and summarises results where some consensus seems to have emerged. All the raw data can be viewed in Appendix A, pages 8-20. Not everybody answered every question – this report takes this into account.

The Businesses

74% of respondents live in the same postal code area as their business premises; with TD7 and TD9 being the areas in which this is most common. The largest single sector of respondents is “Retail” followed by “Hotels and Restaurants”. There were a significant number of respondents who were not represented by the categorised sectors. These included businesses such as Design, a Theatre Company, Tourism, Renewable Energy, Taxi Operations and Childcare.

Of the 5 respondents whose businesses are dependent on the roads network, namely those in “Transport and Haulage” and Taxi Operations, all of them wanted to see improvements to at least the A7 and A68 as these were the two roads that they were most dependent on. Four out of the five agreed that cross Borders links would help their business.

The highest sector of respondents is in “Retail”. 88% of these said that their customers could get to them easily and nobody found it difficult to receive or send out supplies from their business. Out of all the Borders businesses who responded, those who did find it difficult to get supplies were also charged additionally for getting those supplies to their business. There appeared to be little commonality between businesses other than problems with physical access. Two of the

respondents did comment that the closure of their local post office has made it more difficult to send out supplies. One business is perceived to be so 'out of the way' that deliverers don't bother to deliver to it.

60% of respondents hadn't felt that there were any parts of the Borders that were difficult to send out supplies to. Of those who did respond the cross-Borders axis between the East and West seemed to present the most difficulty. 58% of all respondents feel there should be improvements made to cross-Borders routes.

ROADS

The majority of roads problems are felt by respondents in the winter as a direct result of the weather. However of those, only 23% were dissatisfied with the severe weather treatments provided by Scottish Borders Council even though 46% of respondents' businesses suffered as a direct result of road conditions in the last 12 months. The majority of these were as a direct result of bad weather, although some were due to the council's shutting of roads/ roadworks.. Those who were frustrated by the roads in the summer were hampered by tourists, caravans and delivery lorries for the large supermarkets.

The A68 was described as being the most important route, with the A7 a close second and the A679/A698 third.

Though the A68 was voted as the most important route, the A7 was regarded as needing the most improvement in order to help respondents businesses. In terms of requiring improvements, the A68 was a close second to the A7, with the A1 third. 68% of respondents did support the dualling of the A1 with only 6% firmly stating that they do not agree that it should be improved. Of those who didn't agree with the improvement one respondent stated that:

"Dualling the A1 would mean no money to improve the network in the central Borders. The money spent on the new railway is a waste unless the line can be extended and cover more of the Borders and ultimately connect Carlisle and Edinburgh."
Haulage Company, TD9

However one respondent felt that if improvements were made to the A1 it may remove much of the through traffic along the A68, while improving the A68 would simply create more through traffic.

39% of respondents believe that all of the A7 from Langholm to Edinburgh should be improved, but 50% feel that priority should be made to the Abbotsford to Edinburgh section of the A7. One commented that A7 segments between many of the Border towns are slow, inadequate and dangerous.

Only 33% agreed that a Selkirk bypass would help their business. One business felt that:

“Selkirk will never be able to exploit its full potential without a bypass. The safety of pedestrians and drivers has been ignored too long. You don't have to wait for long at the bottom of tower street to see drivers of large vehicles having to mount the pavement to negotiate the bend.” **Manufacturing business, TD9**

Another business stated that a bypass at Lauder would be of great help and another was in favour of improving the route between Edinburgh and Peebles rather than an improved cross-Borders link.

As well as the improvements to major roads, due care should be taken as to how this is coordinated, as one respondent commented:

“I know that essential road maintenance is a priority for the safety of all road users, but why does the local council close a main road i.e. A7 for up to 3 days, during the day, causing major problems for all. Can't this be done at night causing less disruption for all. ...Our small business who rely on passing trade as well as our regular customers.”
Shop Owner, TD1

RAIL

Of the 74 businesses who answered this question, 51% agreed with the proposed rail link, and 46% were against it. Of those who support a rail link, 66% believe it should be extended to Carlisle or to the East Coast mainline. Respondents showed very strong views about the proposed rail development at present, particularly amongst those who disagree with it.

Those against it feel that it will take money away from the road improvements within the Borders that are much more important to them:

“Scottish Borders needs a road based transport infrastructure. The population is too widespread for a rail based strategy to work. Investment used for this will affect the opportunities for road improvements in places like Kelso, Jedburgh and Hawick. A7 and A68 should be upgraded as a matter of priority.” IT Company, TD7

There is also a genuine fear that the public (from the Borders) will end up subsidising it. It is also perceived that it will end up taking as much time to get to Edinburgh as it would if you were to drive. There is also doubt as to whether Tweedbank is the right destination given that it will only serve a relatively small catchment area:

“The chief beneficiaries of the proposed railway would be Edinburgh commuters Transport - it is impossible to be a business person in the Borders without private transport. Everyone needs it so has to finance a car, tax, insurance, etc. Cost of travelling to Edinburgh is therefore a marginal cost of fuel and contribution to consumables such as tyres. Train would therefore have to be very cheap to replace cars, especially as people now car-share splitting marginal costs further. Rail spend would be better diverted to significant A7 improvement with particular or indeed specific need to increase overtaking stretches. Improving a few corners will do nothing - it is overtaking places that are required.” Haulage and Manufacturing company, TD7

Of the rail supporters, one business has seen first-hand the benefits a direct link has brought to other parts of Scotland and feels that it could do the same for the Borders. Another comments on how difficult it is to do business with customers *outwith* the Borders, as:

“..customers from the south tend to be perplexed as to how they can visit us if not wishing to drive (most don't). We usually end up driving to Edinburgh, Berwick or Carlisle to collect them from the rail station or airport.” Design Company, TD7

Public Transport

A minority of businesses rely on customers coming to them by public transport and 51% of respondents answered that the existing public transport system did not make it easy for their customers. However, the majority answered that more bus routes wouldn't help. 75% did assert that without their own transport, they wouldn't be able to conduct business (if they were reliant on

public transport) and 35% felt that the lack of appropriate transport networks affected who they employed. The closing of the Kelso bus depot has affected one respondent's business in particular but it is also the lack of a co-ordinated bus network or timetable that causes frustration with one business commenting that they have to rely on:

"Visitors/audience might be able to get to us after 6pm, but then cannot get home again, so the majority of our audience members have to be car owner/drivers. A 2 hourly service between Galashiels and Berwick, the last bus eastwards is about 7.30pm, while the last bus westwards is at 8.30pm. This is useless for cinema or theatre audiences, where performances start at 7.30pm and end between 10 and 10.30pm." **Theatre Company, TD10**

There is one beneficiary of poor public transport however!

"Poor public transport actually benefits my business as people tend to use my village shop more if they can't get elsewhere! However, I'm all in favour of better public transport." **Village shop, ML12**

General

Some respondents took the opportunity to raise concerns outwith the specific remit of the survey. Car-parking across the Borders is one of these. Another suggestion was to rely less on the transport infrastructure to improve business, focusing instead on an improved fibre-optic network for the region. It is also felt that the FSB should focus on:

"all aspects of employment from lack of job centres to no real practical help in dealing with employment tribunals, covering "unfair dismissal", "redundancy", "discrimination". **Employment Advisor Business, TD5**

Closures of Post Offices have affected small businesses as a whole, not being able to rely on the Post Van to send anything substantial. Another factor affecting rural business is the lack of adequate signage.

“the ability to highlight the attractions and shops in our town along the road network is not easily achieved with the current planning legislation.” **Retail outlet, EH45**

One respondent would also like to see the FSB lobbying the government on the issue of provision of more contracts to small businesses.

Summary

12% of the Scottish Borders FSB membership of 713 (at the time of this survey) responded, a result that has positively surpassed previous surveys of members. Significant factors that have arisen from this survey both quantitatively and qualitatively are: support for the dualling of the A1, improvements to the A7, A68 and cross border routes, even from businesses who are not dependent on it; strength of feeling for and against the railway; dependence on private transport, and lack of reliance on the public transport network. The majority of respondents are happy to pursue transport issues with the Scottish Borders FSB, which leaves room for further debate in the future.

Appendix A

The following are the results. The only information not published are the contact details of each respondent.

1. In which postcode area is your business?

TD1	4	5%
TD2	3	4%
TD3	1	1%
TD4	1	1%
TD5	11	14%
TD6	7	9%
TD7	11	14%
TD8	5	6%
TD9	10	13%
TD10	3	4%
TD11	5	6%
TD12	3	4%
EH26	0	0%
EH38	0	0%
EH43	1	1%
EH44	3	4%
EH45	5	6%
EH46	2	3%
ML12	1	1%
Option 20	4	5%

2. In which postcode area is your home?

TD1	4	5%
TD2	3	4%
TD3	1	1%
TD4	1	1%

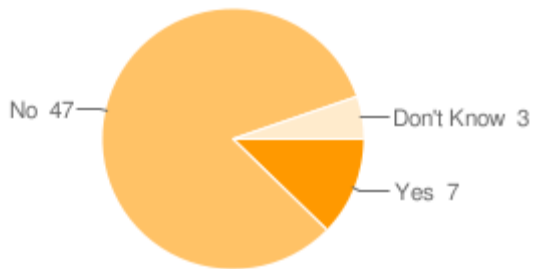
TD5	7	9%
TD6	9	11%
TD7	10	13%
TD8	3	4%
TD9	13	16%
TD10	3	4%
TD11	5	6%
TD12	4	5%
EH26	0	0%
EH38	0	0%
EH43	1	1%
EH44	2	3%
EH45	6	8%
EH46	2	3%
ML12	1	1%
Other	5	6%

3. In which Business Sector are you?

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	4	6%
Construction	5	7%
Financial Services	0	0%
Hotels and Restaurants	8	11%
Manufacturing	6	9%
Media and Marketing and Communications	3	4%
Property and Land Services	5	7%
Retail	19	27%
Transport and Haulage	3	4%

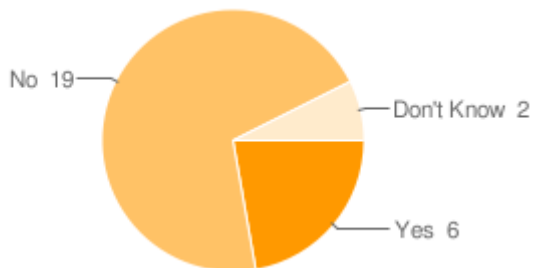
Tourism	1	1%
Other	16	23%

4.1 ROADS - Is it difficult to get supplies to your business?



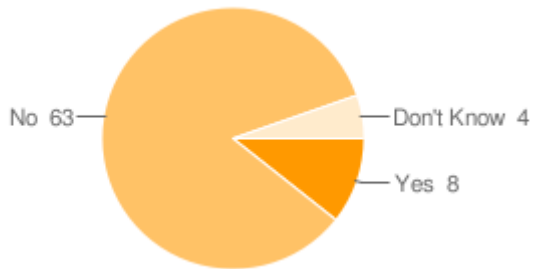
Yes	7	12%
No	47	82%
Don't Know	3	5%

4.2 ROADS - If "Yes", is there an additional charge to bring supplies to your business?



Yes	6	22%
No	19	70%
Don't Know	2	7%

4.3 ROADS - Is it difficult to send out supplies from your business?



Yes	8	11%
No	63	84%
Don't Know	4	5%

4.3 (i) If 'Yes', please state what these are

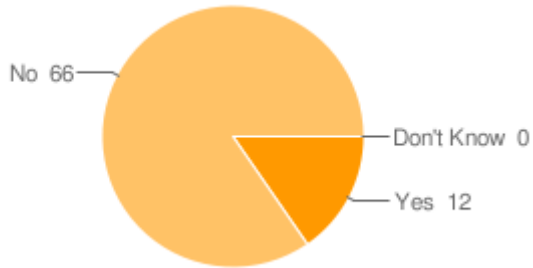
It's not actually a problem of the condition of the roads, just that suppliers see us as 'out of the way' and therefore not worth delivering to. Daily deliveries of bread and milk to my village shop are a particular problem. Freight charges and pick up times Parking, also space for large delivery trucks Roads are too narrow Roads too narrow, parking and double parking on narrow roads. re physical barriers, our own entrance and driveway. Long way to the nearest post office. Local Post Office has just been closed, so parcels have to be taken to next town, as the 'Post Office Van' cannot cope with large quantities of outgoing parcels. This has caused us a dramatic increase in overheads, both in time and fuel/vehicle costs. private road too narrow. inadequate parking. A1 requires dualling.

4.3 (ii) ROADS - If "Yes", where would you say it was most difficult to deliver to within the Borders?

East	3	12%
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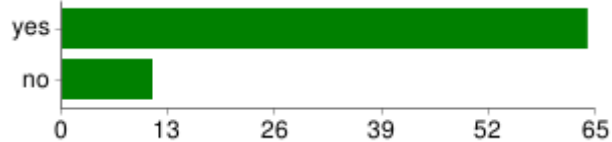
West	4	16%
North	1	4%
South	2	8%
Haven't noticed	15	60%

4.4 ROADS - Are there any physical barriers preventing access to your business?



Yes	12	15%
No	66	85%
Don't Know	0	0%

4.5 ROADS - Can your customers get to you easily?



yes	64	85%
no	11	15%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

4.5 (i) If "No", what is the main problem

Customers can reach me easily, but the council do not recognise our drive in the road markings which makes turning into our drive heading north potentially dangerous. Parking in Kelso is a shocker! 1 mile off A697 on single-track road for which the council were unhappy to erect signpost off the main road. Nearest bus stop is Greenlaw for cross-country trips or Lauder for Edinburgh. Being a taxi operator we can have some difficulty finding out about diversions. Particularly from the south, the A1 being very busy and single carriageway in many places puts people off visiting. Main roads are of poor standards. Need regular bus service. The A7 is now a 40mph procession of traffic during most of the business day. There is a lack of Public Transport. Visitors/audience might be able to get to us after 6pm, but then cannot get home again, so the majority of our audience members have to be car owner/drivers. re customers getting to you easily, except for country roads, 40mins in any direction. Access road too narrow and has a "private"! pavement. Car access only, we have to ferry customers from airports/ trains.

4.6 ROADS - Which times of year are the most difficult for you to travel?

Spring	2	3%
Summer	7	9%

Autumn 1 1%
 Winter 5470%
 Haven't noticed 1722%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

4.6 (i) Please state your reasons for the above answer

Snow - and icy conditions. Roads are pretty good and I have a suitable car! Heavy snow can cause me to stop working due to the nature of the work. Otherwise I have no transport problems. Bad weather! travel on country roads, especially on a Sunday which are frequently untreated. Snow can block road (not very often recently) Low sun bad for my aged eyes in this relatively flat countryside We need to be out in all weathers, some difficulty in winter conditions IE Not gritting minor roads. Timing of journeys becomes difficult as roadworks spring up everywhere in March as Fin. Year comes to a close. General winter weather. Weather. Roads clogged with caravans & slow moving tourist traffic. Weather. Adverse weather, because Duns is higher than most places. As we are on a main road there is equal travel problems. More possibility of severe weather (Soutra and Carter Bar). Tourists and roadworks. Weather. ice and snow in winter and roadworks all year round. Winter weather. Roads not being treated and if treated its after the peak time for workers getting to work. slow city bypass. tourists, caravans, roadworks. winter conditions slow traffic. snow, ice. Have noticed deterioration of road conditions in past two years. customers have experienced tyre failure due to pot holes. snow at our own entrance and driveway. Snow. Tourists. Short daylight, snow/ frost. It's slow moving traffic like Morrison's, Asda, Tesco delivery trucks travelling at 40mph. There are so few straights it is impossible for other hgv, psv or light vans to overtake so an overtaking build up occurs with no one able to pass. Not even the main roads are adequately gritted/ploughed in Winter. The A697 in particular can be extremely hazardous early in the mornings and in the evenings. the weather conditions like snow or ice. Snow. Sometimes snow/ice. snow & ice. snow and on the roads, lack of grit sometimes. A7 is a disgrace at most times of year but in the winter it is positively third world. Weather conditions. snow and ice. Snow. SNOW. Snow. bad weather, snow. winter weather. ice and snow. Poor Snow and Ice clearance. Snow. snow & ice. snow also sometimes local council sometimes closes road for road maintenance. Snow-but it doesn't affect our business, which is now largely Internet-based. Winter Icy Roads, Summer heavy caravan traffic on the A7. Weather and snow. dark evenings , weather conditions. Tourists !! The Highlands are a nightmare >><< never mind !! weather. Snow.

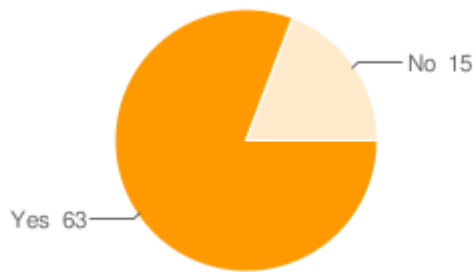
4.7 ROADS - Considering the following main routes, which route(s) would you consider to be of most importance to your Business?

A1 1622%

A7	3243%
A68	3953%
A72	1622%
A679_A698	1926%
Other	4 5%

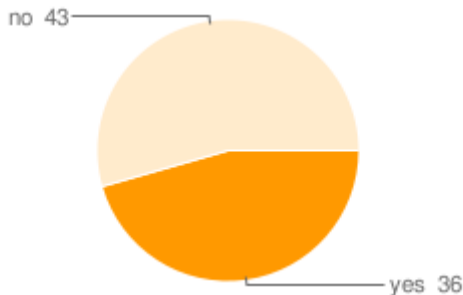
People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

4.8 ROADS - Overall are you satisfied with the severe weather road treatments provided by Scottish Borders Council in winter ?



Yes	6381%
No	1519%

4.9 ROADS - Thinking over the last year, were there any instances where your business suffered as a result of road conditions?



yes	3646%
no	4354%

4.9 (i) If "Yes", what was the problem?

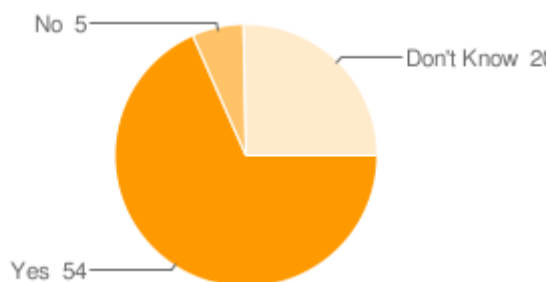
Supplies not getting through. As a result of pavements not being treated timeously, or grit bins being provided, I fell and fractured my wrist. This caused 6 weeks loss of work. Lack of treatment in time to A7 causing closure from Selkirk to Hawick and difficult driving conditions elsewhere. I could not get to work because of snow and ice. Lack of winter safety precautions. On one or two occasions meetings had to be cancelled. Couldn't get to clients in Edinburgh. Deep snow. Staff unable to get to work due to road conditions. Various road works in town centre. - Snow - 3 days trading lost, employees not able to come and/ or sent home early. Main roads were blocked through lack of treatment. snow and roadworks. Time keeping in bad conditions, loss of earnings. Snow and ice on side roads. Snow prevented customers arrival. Getting into town after heavy snow. Access over Soutra. Reluctance of any customers to venture south of Edinburgh due to excessive time to cover relatively short distance. Scottish Borders Council quite happily close roads for days on end just to carry out minor repairs, where in other Council areas, even adjacent ones, the Risk Assessment result is to put up traffic lights and operate one way traffic at road works. Even the A697 was closed for two separate weeks last year, which resulted in zero tourists stopping in Greenlaw, as the Diversion routed traffic via Kelso!! We are on a slope and side street and due to constraints on the sanding of side roads by the Council during a freeze, sometimes our customers could not get down the hill to us. Roads crossed by

snow - only a short term problem. SUPPLIERS UNABLE TO GET TO US FROM EDINBURGH AREA. Could not get to customers because of road conditions. Lack of customers in the coffee shop due to the weather which impacted upon the road conditions. Snow discouraging customers from venturing out. Rural roads blocked by snow and also flood damage so flooring/ furniture couldn't be delivered/ fitted. SNOW. Snow. We had some cancellations due to weather - but we also had some people staying on due to it. But there was noticeably less gritting this year. We have not seen a snow plough up our council adopted road for about two years; if i am not available to clear snow by hand then the local residents have to help. All residents are retired and no well enough to do a job that the council should be doing as part of their taxes. (The Glebe, Ashkirk) snow. Bad snow fall. Snow and road maintenance. Snow. Roads closed >><< Not enough SALT available to keep them open >< Cut backs again no doubt. snow

4.10 ROADS - Improvements to which road system(s) would most help your business?

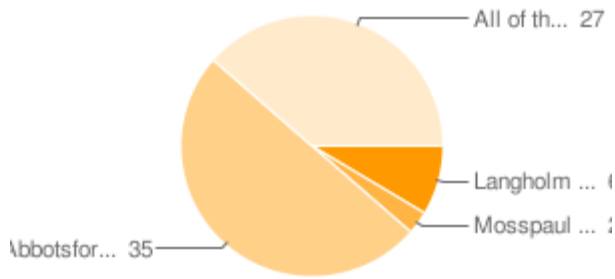
A1	16.25%
A68	28.44%
A7	31.48%
A72	11.17%
A697/ A698	15.23%
Other	2.3%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.



Yes	54.68%
No	5.6%
Don't Know	20.25%

4.12 ROADS - If there were to be improvements made to the A7, which section of the route would you prioritise?



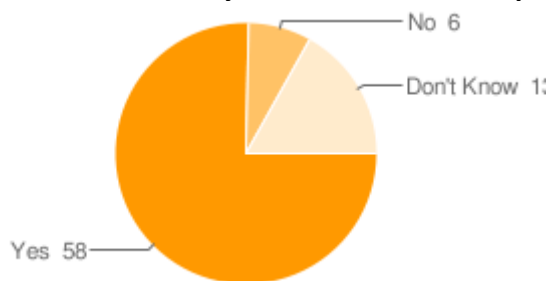
Langholm to Mosspace	6	9%
Mosspace to the Abbotsford roundabout	2	3%
Abbotsford to Edinburgh	35	50%
All of the above	27	39%

4.13 ROADS - Are there any other sections of major routes that you would like to see improved?

A7 Langholm to Hawick Selkirk to Innerleithen A68 Earlston to Edinburgh Lauder-Edinburgh A decent cross border route to Dumfries & to Galloway A698/A697 South. None, now that Langholm is almost complete although Hawick centre and Kelso is poorly indicated and needs to improve. Dual A68 or A7. A7. A703, especially Redburn Junction. bypass Earlston and Lauder. Berwick to Galashiels. improved signage would help. A7 for starters. A68 to Edinburgh. A701. The sunken drain covers through Selkirk need urgent repair, particularly at the bottom of Tower Street - but a bypass would be better. Also there is now dreadful congestion in Galashiels between the Kingsknowe roundabout and the town centre. A68 Dual Road. A7 at Selkirk.

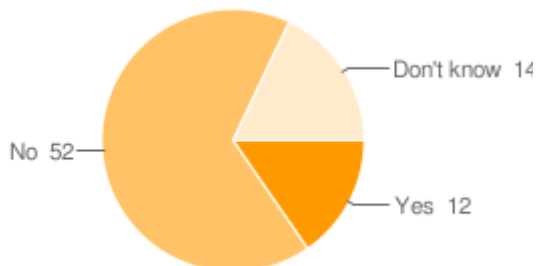
...

4.14 ROADS - Would you be in favour of improved cross-Borders links?



Yes	58	75%
No	6	8%
Don't Know	13	17%

4.15 ROADS - Would a Selkirk Bypass help your business?



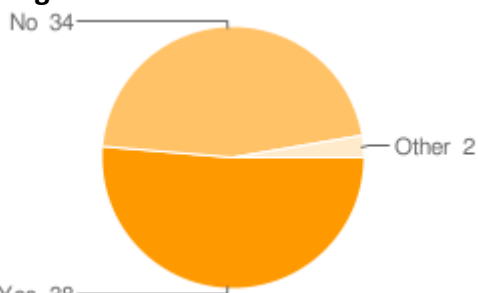
Yes	12	15%
No	52	67%
Don't know	14	18%

4.15 (i) If you answered "Yes" to the above question, please expand

Quicker and safer travel would make the A7 a more viable travel option there is a fast route crossborder to Selkirk, but then Selkirk itself is a real bottle neck. Reduce journey time to Edinburgh Selkirk is a bottle neck and it is dangerous for the public crossing roads with the volume of traffic and the tight bend at the corner of Market Pl and the High Street Help traffic flow in Selkirk! re improved cross borders links, Peebles, Galashiels, Kelso. re cross-Borders links, to facilitate traffic from the west, ie A7 routes between many of the Border towns

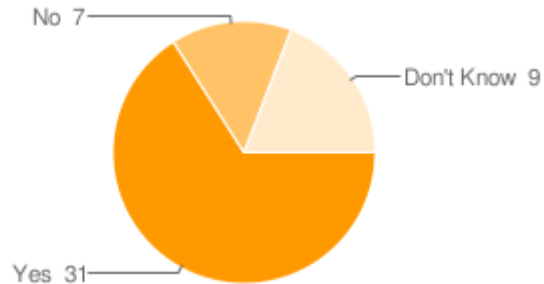
are slow, inadequate and dangerous. Retailers (our customers) would benefit hugely from the removal of large vehicles from town centre. EVERY town that has had a bypass built has been able to prosper economically as a result. Any improvements which help people move around the Borders have to be beneficial. Any improvement to local roads would be welcome, my customers coming from the Newcastle area and haulage of scenery would appreciate a shorter, easier journey. Same goes for west coast/ Glasgow area, Cumbria/ Carlisle/m6 and north/ Edinburgh area. Along with Hawick, Selkirk as the worst and most frustrating through traffic. It would make it easier for us to get to the post. We have branches in Hawick and Galashiels, it would save a lot of expensive staff and management time travelling between branches. Live in Selkirk and sometimes biggest difficulty in getting to work is negotiating high street due to the articulated Lorries! Speed.

5 RAIL - Are you in favour of the proposed rail link from Tweedbank to Edinburgh?



Yes	38	51%
No	34	46%
Other	2	3%

5 (i) If "Yes", would you like to see the rail route extended?

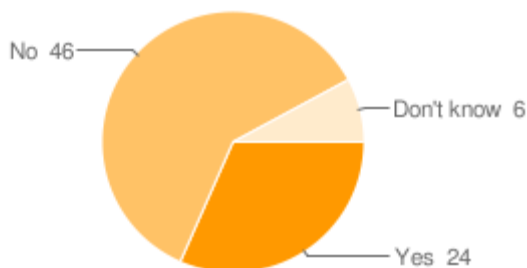


Yes	31	66%
No	7	15%
Don't Know	9	19%

5 (ii) If "Yes", where would you like to see the extension go to?

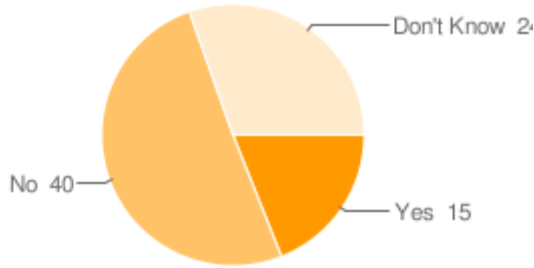
At least to Hawick if not Carlisle
 CarlisleLondon
 Carlisle or Newcastle
 CarlisleAcross to Duns...
 Hawick/Carsile/Newcastle
 CarlisleKelso - Carlisle
 CarlisleTo Carlisle
 CarlisleSouth: Newcastle airport, Eas...

6 PUBLIC TRANSPORT - Are any of your customers reliant on public transport to get to you?



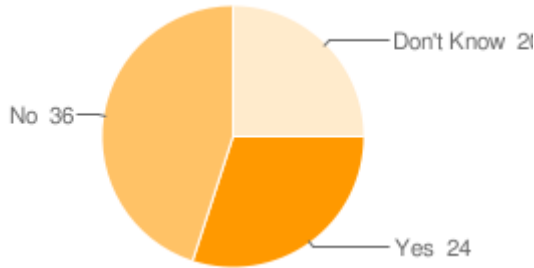
Yes	24	32%
No	46	61%
Don't know	6	8%

6.1 PUBLIC TRANSPORT - Does the existing Public Transport system make it easy for customers to get to your business?



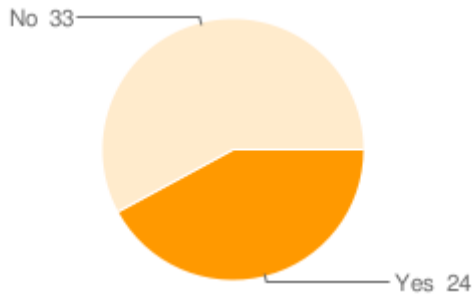
Yes **15**19%
 No **40**51%
 Don't Know **2**30%

6.2 PUBLIC TRANSPORT - Would more bus routes help your business?



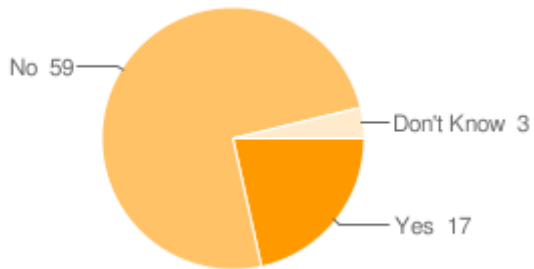
Yes **24**30%
 No **36**45%
 Don't Know **2**2025%

6.3 PUBLIC TRANSPORT - Are the buses frequent enough?



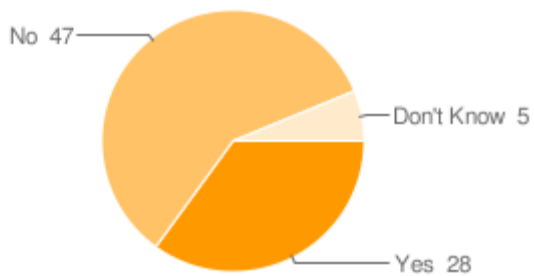
Yes **24**42%
 No **33**58%

6.4 PUBLIC TRANSPORT - In the absence of your private vehicle would you still be able to conduct your business?



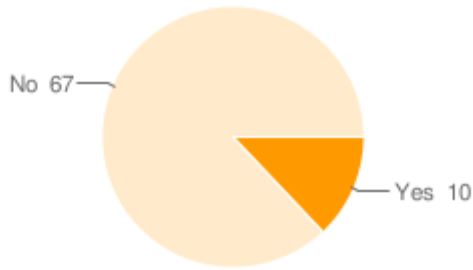
Yes **17**22%
 No **59**75%
 Don't Know **3** 4%

6.5 PUBLIC TRANSPORT - Do the existing transport and road networks affect who you employ?



Yes **28**35%
 No **47**59%
 Don't Know **5** 6%

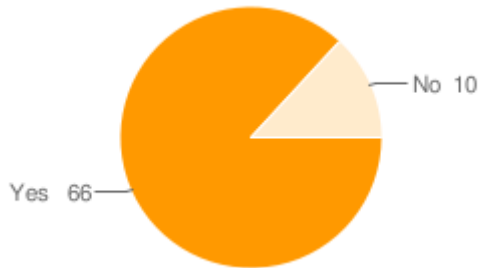
7 Would you mind us contacting you again in the future regarding transport issues?



Yes 1013%

No 6787%

7.1 Would you like to enter the prize draw for a year’s free subscription to the FSB?



Yes 6687%

No 1013%

**7.1 (i) If you answered yes to the above questions please enter your preferred contact details below
8 If you have any additional comments about any of the questions above, or what involvement you would like to see the FSB having on your behalf then please feel free to fill in the comments box below**

Railway - the Business Plan is in trouble. The cost base seems seriously underestimated and would lead to large increases in cash required from the public. Much better to improve the Road infrastructure. Almost all roads are at present in dramatic need of repair. Poor public transport actually benefits my business as people tend to use my village shop more if they can't get elsewhere! However, I'm all in favor of better public transport. The actual condition of the roads isn't a problem for me, but I dream about a van which goes all round the Borders delivering local produce to village .. A bypass at Lauder would be a great help. Whilst it would be nice to see the Waverley Route re-opened Edinburgh to Carlisle, this is clearly unlikely to ever happen and where I live, Berwick-on-Tweed provides a much better service than the proposed Edinburgh-Tweedbank line. The same must apply to the whole of Berwickshire. St Boswells to Carlisle and West Coast mainline would be of benefit but extremely unlikely ! The rail link would be most acceptable if it ran to Carlisle, clients in the immediate area still have to travel to Twedbank for a rail link thayt takes in excess of 1.5hrs to get to Waverley. Better spending money on upgrading A7 if not taking railway to Carlisle. On the above, having a rail link at Berwick and at Dunbar is good for Berwickshire. However, a station at Reston would allow people to drive less and enable clients/customers easier access to businesses. A station at Reston would also potentially create some new jobs - station staff, taxi drivers, cafe staff etc.

generally, as a small business owner, I would like to see FSB lobbying the government to provide more contracts to small businesses, say 30% of all central and local government contracts have to go to local small businesses. I would hope FSB is looking to get the Borders better connected in any way possible. Pressing for a better fibre-optic network too. This survey is a wasted opportunity - transport is of low interest to small businesses. A survey should have been done on all aspects of employment from lack of job centres to no real practical help in dealing with employment tribunals, covering "unfair dismissal", "redundancy", "discrimination". You must prioritise what is asked of our members otherwise they get bored of filling in forms - personal issues should be set aside. Please chase railway completion date. Has it even started yet? I have seen vast benefits to areas such as lower and upper clyde, Wemyss, west north, and east edinbunrgh and helensburgh hub links. Dunfermline, Dunbar. Same benefits will come to Borders via raillink.

Borders Railway is a costly indulgence by our politicians and a few activists and unsustainable unless hugely subsidised by public purse - that means - all of us!!

The Tweedbank station will serve only a relatively small catchment. Commuters will not travel by car to the station from Kelso, lauder, Earlston etc. etc.. when they could be half way to Edinburgh. Better to spend on improving road links.

Re buses, there are none.

Dualling the A1 would mean no money to improve the network in the central borders. The money spent on the new railway is a waste unless the line can be extended and cover more of the borders and ultimately connect Carlisle and Edinburgh. Re buses being frequent enough - if on time and not cancelled!

Parking!! All aspects of parking in Borders towns. Only because I work from home, my staff would have problems getting into work though. An improved road to Edinburgh from Peebles would be better than an improved cross borders link. The chief beneficiaries of the proposed railway would be Edinburgh commuters. There seems to be a noticeable increase in traffic on the A68 between Jedburgh and Earlston. Improving the A1 might remove much of the through traffic, improving the A68 might add to the through traffic.

We do not mind being contacted but we are very small with no employees except occasional consultation with an IT competent son!

Transport - it is impossible to be a business person in the Borders without private transport. Everyone needs it so has to finance a car, tax, insurance, etc. Cost of traveling to Edinburgh is therefore a marginal cost of fuel and contribution to consumables such as tyres. Train would therefore have to be very cheap to replace cars, especially as people now car-share splitting marginal costs further. Rail spend would be better diverted to significant A7 improvement with particular or indeed specific need to increase overtaking stretches. Improving a few corners will do nothing - it is overtaking places that are required.

Greenlaw, once the proud County Town of Berwickshire, is now the 'forgotten backwater' in terms of Council spending. With a derelict former Town Hall dominating the centre of the village, traffic speeding through the village, and minimal council spending on the environment, many locals are extremely discouraged and take no interest in the appearance or amenities within the village.

The recent closure of the Post Office has been a major blow to businesses in the village and surrounding area, and the 'Post Van' is useless for sending anything more than a single parcel or letter, resulting in large outgoing mailshots/parcel postings having to be driven an 18 mile round trip to Duns.

Public Transport - we have to rely on a 2 hourly service between Galashiels and Berwick, the last bus eastwards is about 7.30pm, while the last bus westwards is at 8.30pm. This is useless for cinema or theatre audiences, where performances start at 7.30pm and end between 10 and 10.30pm.

The question of adequate signage often comes up in our local business association meetings. The ability to highlight the attractions and shops in our town along the road network is not easily achieved with the current planning legislation.

Customers from the south tend to be perplexed as to how they can visit us if not wishing to drive (most don't). We usually end up driving to Edinburgh, Berwick or Carlisle to collect them from the rail station or airport. Selkirk will never be able to exploit its full potential without a bypass. The safety of pedestrians and drivers has been ignored too long. You don't have to wait for long at the bottom of tower street to see drivers of large vehicles having to mount the pavement to negotiate the bend.

Scottish Borders needs a road based transport infrastructure. The population is too widespread for a rail based strategy to work. Investment used for this will effect the opportunities for road improvements in places like Kelso, Jedburgh and Hawick. A7 and A68 should be upgraded as a matter of priority.

The Edinburgh Railway line is a waste of our money!

I know that essential road maintenance is a priority for the safety of all road users, but why does the local council close a main road i.e A7 for up to 3 days ,during the day,causing major problems for all.Cant this be done at night causing less disruption for all.Instead of looking after major shopping supermarkets,whom will not notice any differences in their takings unlike our small business who rels on passing trade aswell as our regular customers.When i questioned council official ,i was told the road had to be closed to maintain that all larger lorries could safely use the main A68,AND NOT GET STUCK AT68 ANY MAINTENANCE FURTHER DOWN THE A7 AT THAT TIME .I feel council in Galashiels are more interested in these larger companys that all of the local small businesses and our local people and traders.

Because of the nature of our new business, which as mentioned above is Internet-based, many of the questions relating to customers (as opposed to suppliers) are not relevant to us. We have two other businesses, in public relations and property, although both are suffering badly as a result of the recession.

I am opposed to the rail link, because there is no guarantee that substantial costs will not fall on the Borders community, with no benefit to the majority.

For most Borderers the journey will be long and inconvenient, compared with travelling by car. Who will want to drive to Tweedbank, wait for a train, then wait for another train at Newcraighall, then get from Waverley to where you need to be in the city, when you can get in your car and drive directly from home to your destination? There's no contest.

Buses are a scourge of the Border roads, far too big!

As big as the transport solutions may be, the 'farce' caused by Kelso losing its bus depot was and is even greater an issue to me and my small business.

I have already gone through the motions of streetscape, one way, the other way and then two way and now one way. Bus routes have been changed to suit the one-way system and not previously where it supplemented my business. The number of customers have dropped considerably over the years with those changes and now worsened by the recession.