

Foreword

Climate change is a topic which receives a huge of media coverage in Northern Ireland. Government, local councils, local and national media and people in the street discuss it, and its impact on the world regularly.

I have undertaken this study of business attitudes towards climate change to help Belfast City Council provide better services for the business community in Belfast. The results will be used to help inform the decision-making and to improve future waste management communication campaigns.

I studied law at the University of Zurich, focusing specifically on environmental law.

I found this research very useful in expanding my knowledge of what people and businesses in Belfast think of their environment and how their perceptions of climate change.

I found the face-to-face interviews that I conducted very informative, and these provided an insight into businesses waste management and environmental practices. It was very interesting to speak to national and global businesses such as IKEA, Michelin Tyre Ballymena, Subway, and to charity and church community organisations as well. This allowed me to learn from the personal experiences of all types and sizes of business, and also highlighted the various barriers to improving environmental performance that exist across all industries.

I found businesses very willing to discuss topics like climate change and environmental protection, and this made my task much easier.

The experience has shown me that business attitudes towards environmental issues are very positive. Even though businesses are under pressure with the current recession, they took the time to speak me about these topics and gave very useful information. This information will help Belfast City Council provide better environmental services to Belfast's businesses in the future.

Miriam Jane Roth
International Intern with Belfast City Council

Study of the environmental attitudes of businesses in Belfast

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I. Survey

1 Executive summary

We are currently reviewing the environmental services we provide to the business community in Belfast. Both government and the media constantly remind us of the potential impact and the consequences of climate change on our environment and economy. While the topic receives much coverage, we are keen to know what Northern Ireland businesses actually think about this issue.

We have conducted a study which focuses on the current and future environmental practices of businesses. To get the information we needed a snap survey was emailed to 1,400 businesses in December 2008. We achieved a 10% response rate, getting 144 responses.

To get more qualitative feedback we asked businesses to take part in face-to-face interviews, and 58 businesses (44% of all respondents) agreed to participate.

We asked businesses to tell us what drives them to improve their environmental practices, as well as what barriers stand in their way. They identified legislation from the European Union, customer expectations and increased focus on corporate social responsibility as drivers to improving their environmental actions, while many identified cost as a barrier to implementing changes.

The research examined the level of awareness businesses have of the connection between resource efficiency (water, electricity, gas, waste management) and potential costs savings. It also asked whether businesses would consider using renewable energy as a way of helping the environment.

We were keen to know if businesses accepted the concept of climate change and the influence it had on their future business decisions.

In the current recession businesses face big challenges, and many are simply trying to survive. We wanted to know how the economic crisis affects the importance businesses place on improving their environmental practices.

Every business has an important part to play in improving Belfast's environment. Many modern European cities and businesses have shown that being more environmentally friendly can help contribute to the local economy and to the environment of their surrounding

areas. With the support of businesses, we can help Belfast become a greener city.

The results of this research will help us make key strategic decisions, develop future environmental initiatives, services and partnerships, and communicate important messages to the business community in Belfast.

2 Introduction

Belfast has a population of almost 300,000 people and is the biggest city in Northern Ireland. In the mid 1990's Northern Ireland entered a peace process which brought excellent social and economic benefits to the region. These benefits have led to a significant economic growth and increased business activity in Belfast.

Since the mid nineties several new developments have been built in Belfast including Victoria Square, the Odyssey complex and the Waterfront Hall. There are also several regeneration projects ongoing in the city such as the Titanic Quarter project and Antrim Road geol.

Over the past 15 years many new businesses have been set up. And there are now more than 5,000 business in the Greater Belfast area. The majority of these businesses are small to medium sized enterprises (SME's) with 1-49 employees.

With economic growth, environmental problems arise and present new challenges. With the economic boom throughout the nineties, GDP rates, spending rates and other economic indicators increased. As well as this the waste production rates of the city increased dramatically.

In Belfast, we collect about 130,000 tonnes of household waste annually, and we only recycle 39,000 tonnes of this.

In 2004/05, EHS (Environmental Heritage Service) undertook a waste classification study for Northern Ireland which identified that there were arisings of 1.5 million tonnes of commercial and industrial waste (C&I) waste per year. Belfast produces approximately 1/6 of the NI waste and, allowing for a margin of underreporting of C&I waste which is believed to have happened during the study and an estimate for economic growth since it was conducted, it is probable that, in business terms, the City produced a figure around 500,000 tonnes of C&I waste in 2008.

We have taken many steps to improve our waste production and recycling levels in Belfast; we have waste management awareness campaigns, kerbside recycling services and award winning recycling centres and we hope to increase the recycling rate in Belfast from 26% in 2008-09 to 50% by 2020.

Now, in 2009, the recession has hit the Belfast business community hard. Many businesses have closed down and many employees have lost their jobs and incomes have fallen. As a result our waste levels have decreased by 9% but more remains to be done and further opportunities to address waste and waste management remain.

We still send the remaining waste that we cannot recycle to landfill (about 91,000 tonnes per year), and if this figure does not continue to fall rapidly, the council could face heavy fines from the EU.

In June 2009 we decided to release 17 acres of council land to a waste management partnership called arc21. This partnership intends to use the land to build a mechanical biological treatment (MBT) plant. This plant will sort and compact waste before it is either landfilled or sent to an Energy from Waste facility outside Belfast.

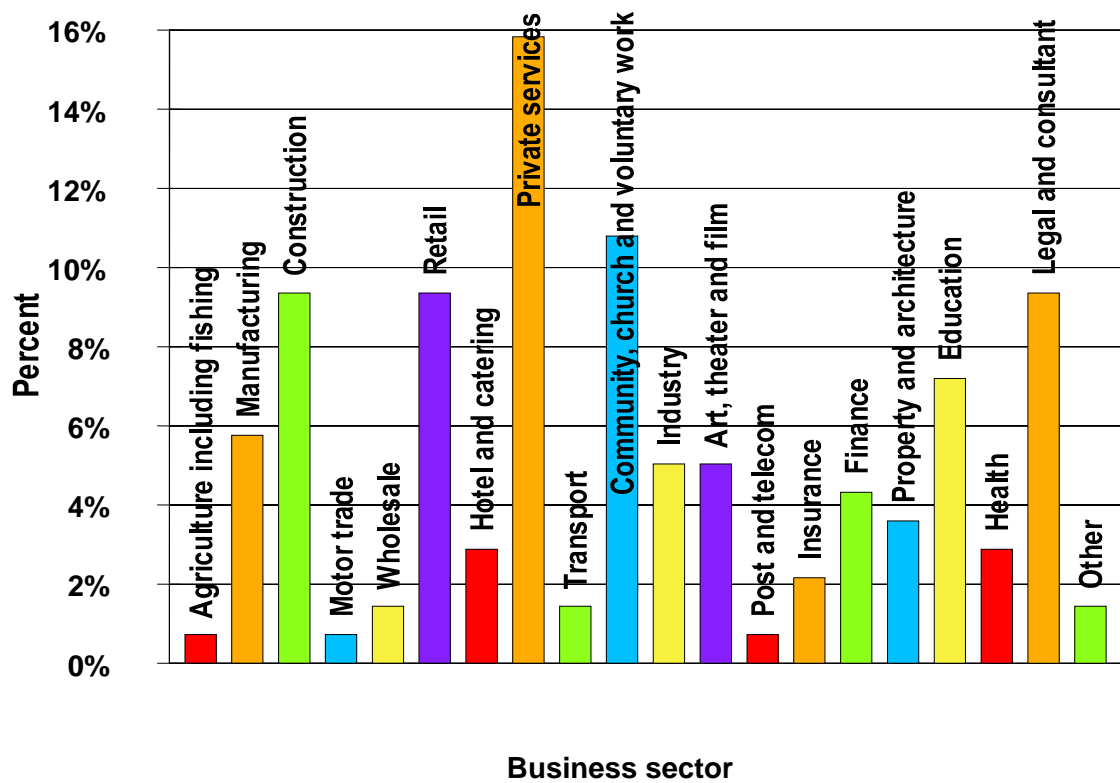
It is hoped this MBT plant will help Belfast's residents and businesses avoid fines, however, at present, this cannot be guaranteed.

Going forward, businesses, government and citizens (households, residents) must identify managing their use of resources and waste management practices, while trying to survive the economic crisis.

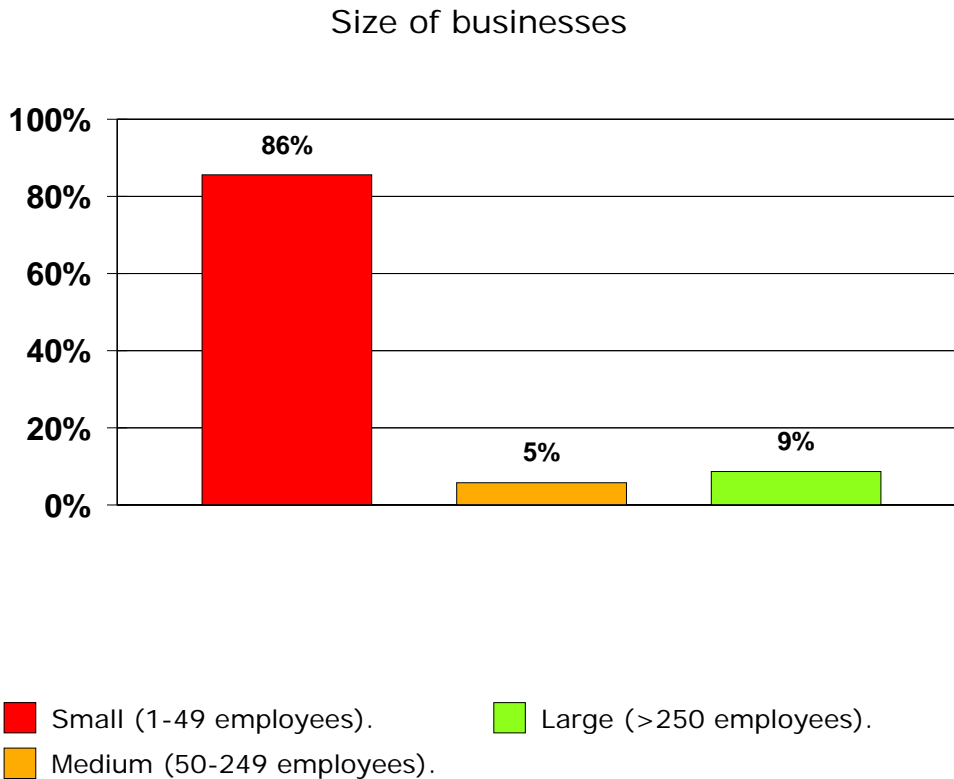
II. Analysis

1 Details of the businesses questioned

1.1 Business sector



1.2 Size of businesses



The majority of all businesses questioned were SME's, employing 1-49 employees.

2 Business' views on the environment and climate change

2.1 Introduction

In this section we wanted to know if business accepted the concept of climate change. We asked a series of questions in a specific order to gauge what impact they felt human behaviour had on the environment:

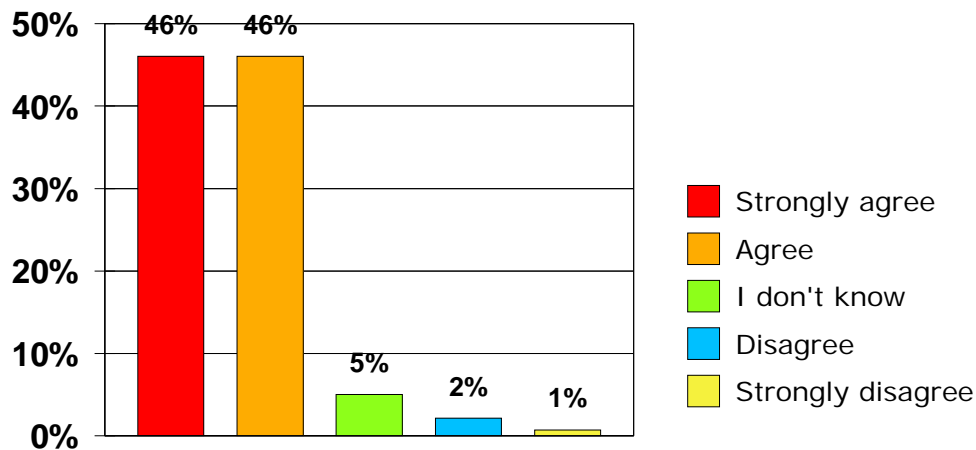
- Do current consumer habits have a detrimental impact on the global or local environment?
- Are current consumer habits leading to increased greenhouse gas emissions?
- Do greenhouse gases cause an increase in temperature and global warming?
- Could global warming have a detrimental impact on the environment in Northern Ireland?

The cascade tries to make businesses aware of the composition and complexity of our atmosphere and the effects of human consumer habits.

The survey asked businesses if they agree or disagree with the following statements:

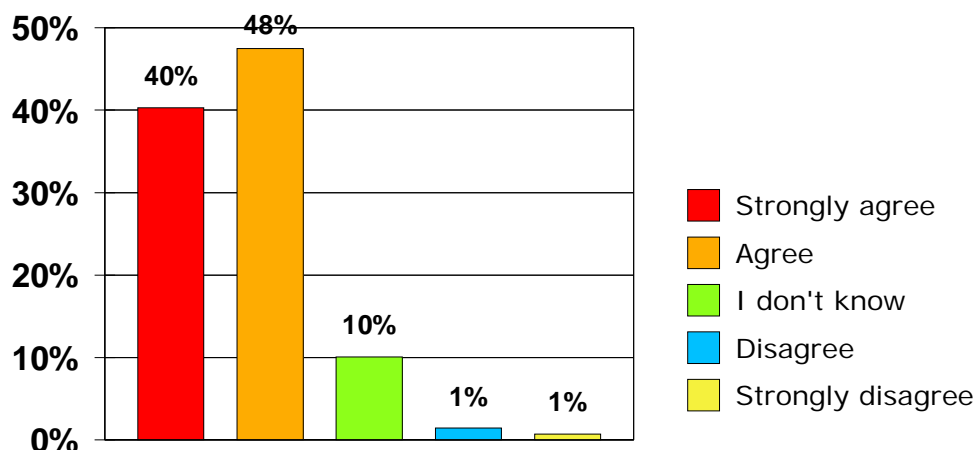
2.2 Statements on climate change

(a) "Current consumer habits (e.g. use of purchasing and packaging, transport, energy, disposal of waste) are having a detrimental impact on the global environment."



Of the businesses that responded 92% agreed or strongly agreed that current consumer habits are having a detrimental impact on the global environment. Only 3% of businesses disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

(b) "Current consumer habits (e.g. use of purchasing and packaging, transport, energy, disposal of waste) are having a detrimental impact on the local environment."



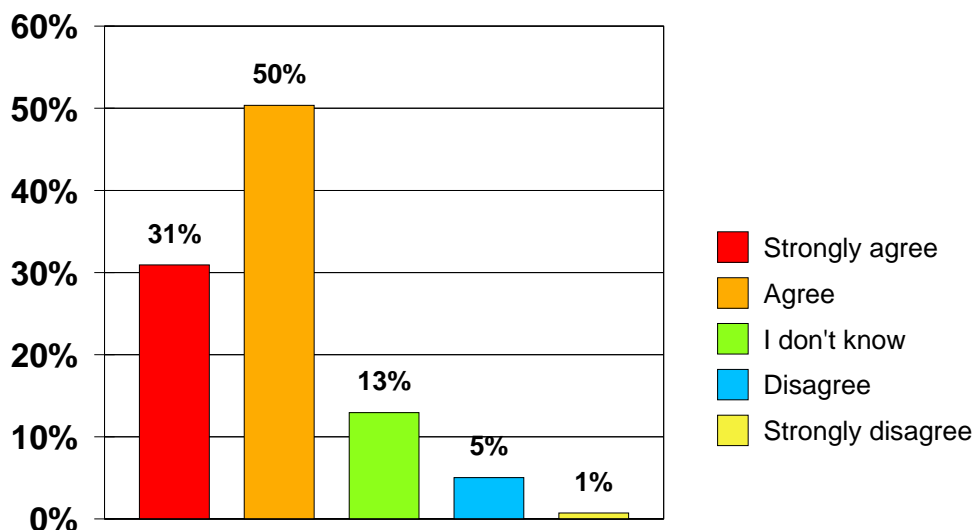
Of businesses that responded to the survey 88% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

This figure is 4% lower than the percentage of people who agree that consumer habits are having a detrimental effect on the global environment (2.2a).

The percentage difference may be because the effects are not as easily recognised locally as they are globally. Many people see the global effects of our consumer habits on the news. Reports of water shortages and extreme weather conditions in different parts of the world alert businesses to the global effects of climate change however they do not connect this with their local environment.

Climate change is a term mostly used in a global context. It describes global warming, melting ice caps and the demolition of natural reserves. In discussions about climate change people automatically think of the global impact and their recognition of its impact on local areas is limited.

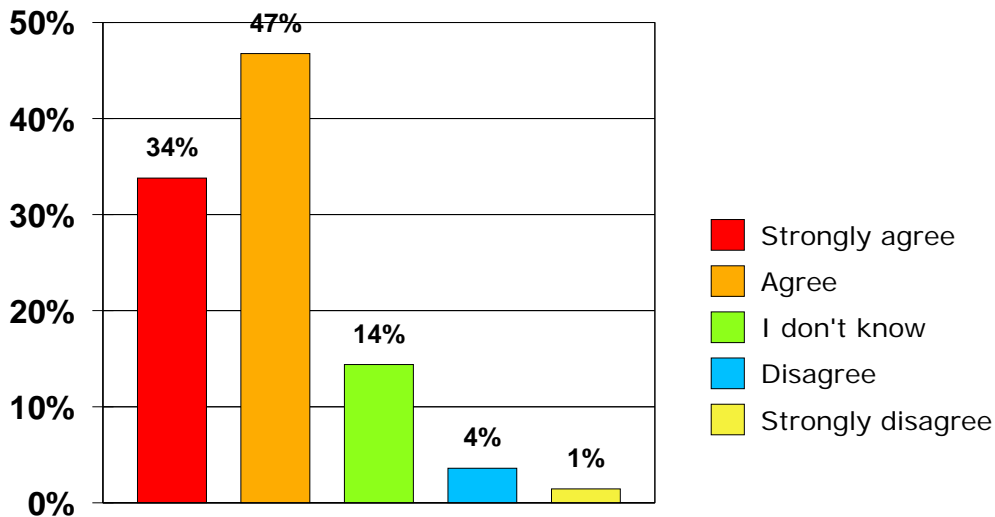
(c) "Current consumer habits are leading to increased greenhouse gas emissions."



Of the businesses that responded to the survey 81% of them agreed or strongly agreed that current consumer habits increase the amount of greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere. 13% of the businesses questioned didn't know whether consumer habits contributed to this. Only 6% of businesses that responded disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

The results of the survey show that the majority of all businesses agree that human consumer habits are leading to an increase in greenhouse gases.

(d) "Greenhouse gases cause temperatures to increase and contribute towards global warming."



The question of whether an increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere causes an increase in the earth's temperature is a massively debated issue.

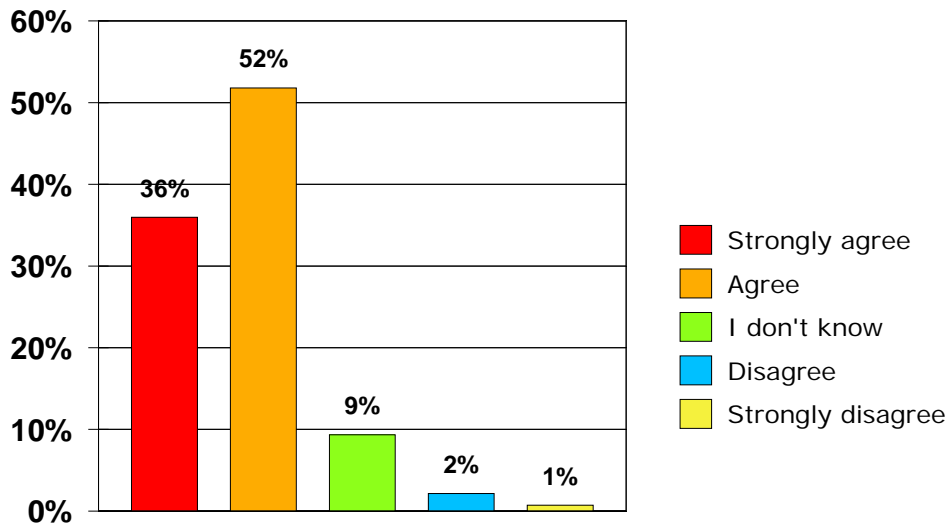
Many scientific reports, including the official report of IPCC¹ support the theory that greenhouse gases increase the earth's temperature and contribute towards global warming.

However, some researchers argue that the real reason for global warming lies in a natural cycle which will happen with or without human intervention. Those who support this natural cycle theory refer to historic temperature data, for example the changes in temperature during the 15 to end of the 19 century which was called the small ice age.

Our survey shows that the majority of businesses that responded (81%) support the view that a rise in greenhouses gases in the atmosphere leads to an increase in global temperatures. Meanwhile 14% don't know and 5% disagreed with this theory.

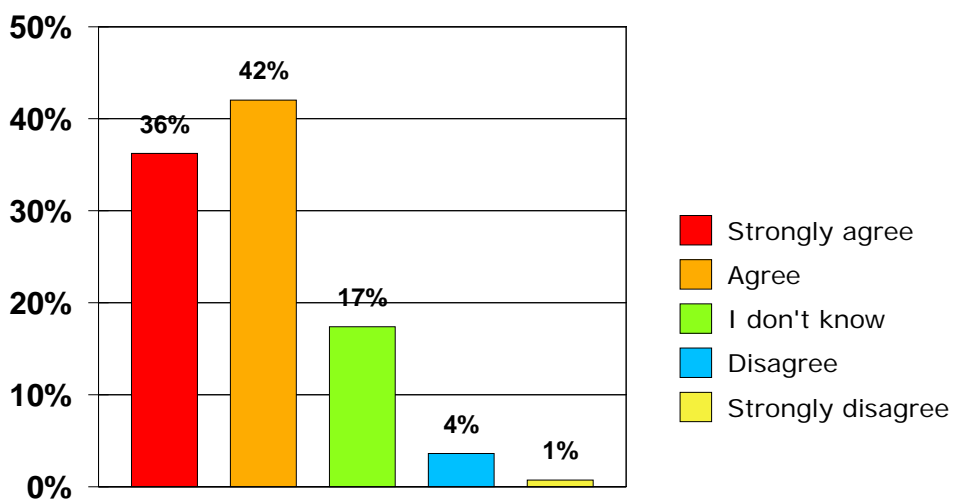
¹ Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change.

(e) "Global warming leads to climate change."



Of the businesses surveyed, 88% supported the view that increase in temperature leads to global warming. Meanwhile 9% did not know and 3% disagreed this statement.

(f) "Climate change will have a detrimental impact on Northern Ireland."



Of all businesses that responded 78% agreed or strongly agreed that global warming will have a detrimental impact on Northern Ireland. On the other hand 17% didn't know and 5% disagreed this statement.

This indicates that the majority of respondents recognise the local impact of climate change.

2.3 Conclusion

The research shows that more than four-fifths of the businesses (88%) that responded support the theory that human intervention contributes to climate change.

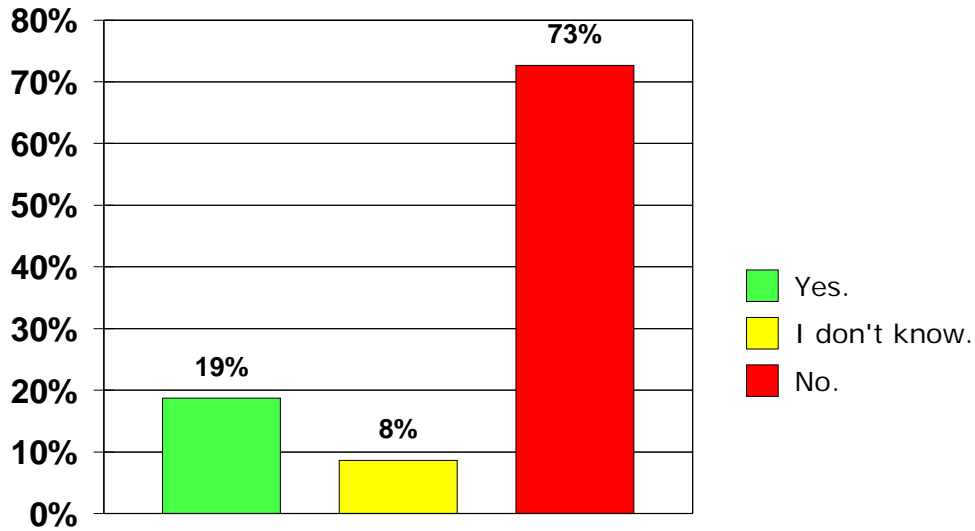
They agree that current consumer habits contribute to the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, which cause an increase in temperature, and lead to global warming. Also, at least 78% agree that global warming will have a detrimental impact on Northern Ireland.

Throughout this study every business interviewed acknowledged that climate change exists, however, they were not all in agreement on the reasons for its existence – some supported the theory of man-made climate change, while others supported the natural cycle explanation for it.

3 Satisfaction with the state of the environment

3.1 State of the environment in and around Belfast

Are you happy with the state of the environment in and around Belfast?



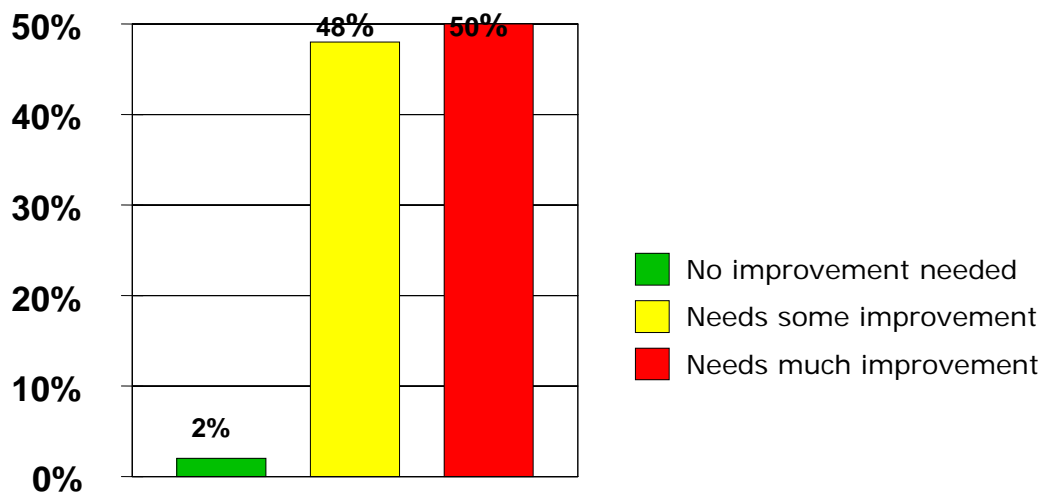
Almost three-quarters (73%) of the all the businesses questioned were not happy with the state of the environment in and around Belfast. Only 19% of respondents were satisfied with their local environment.

3.2 Suggested improvements

We asked businesses which area of the environment in and around Belfast they feel needs improvement:

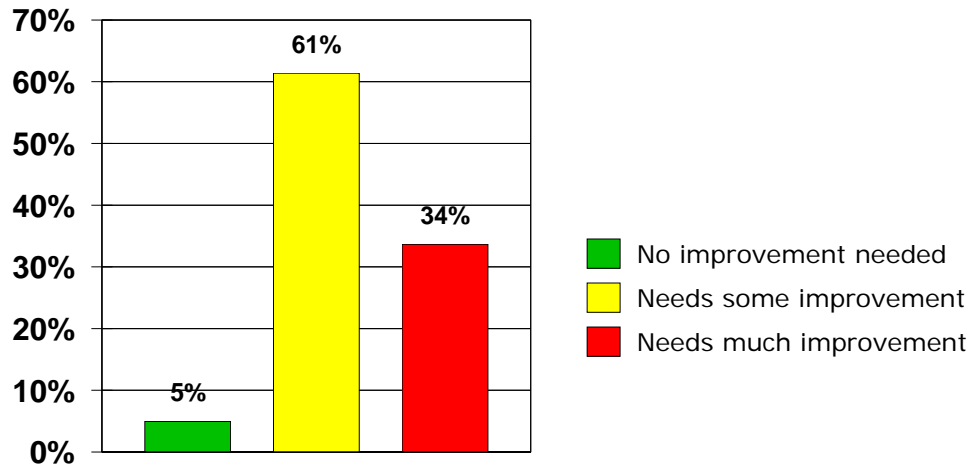
3.2.1 Cleanliness of the city

Please tell us which area of the environment in an around Belfast you feel needs improvement:
"Cleanliness of the city"



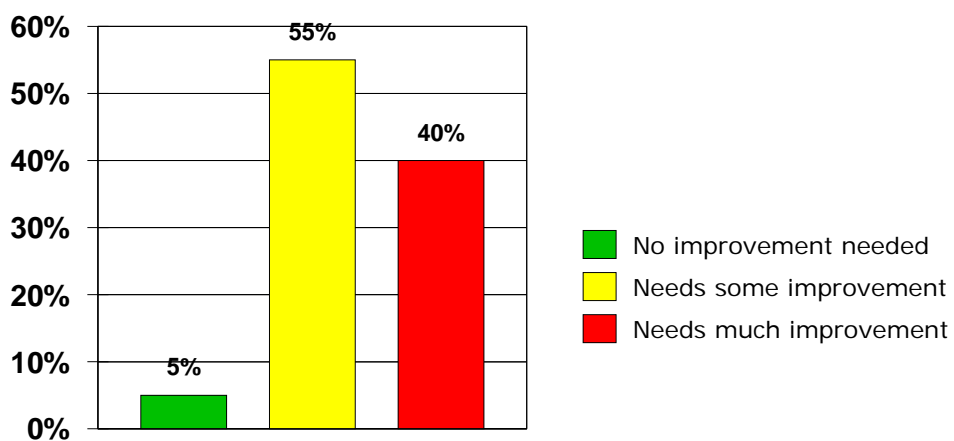
3.2.2 Cleanliness of the countryside

Please tell us which area of the environment in and around Belfast you feel needs improvement:
"Cleanliness of our countryside"



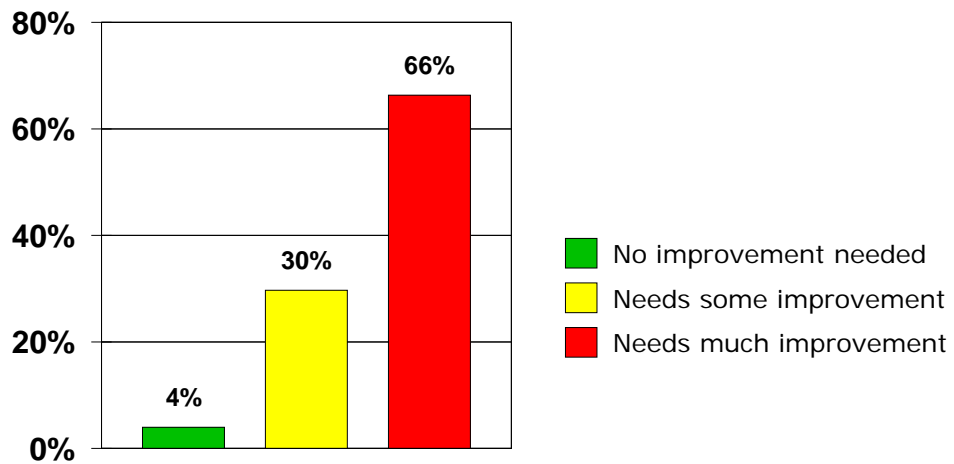
3.2.3 Water pollution

Please tell us which area of the environment in and around Belfast you feel needs improvement:
"Water pollution"



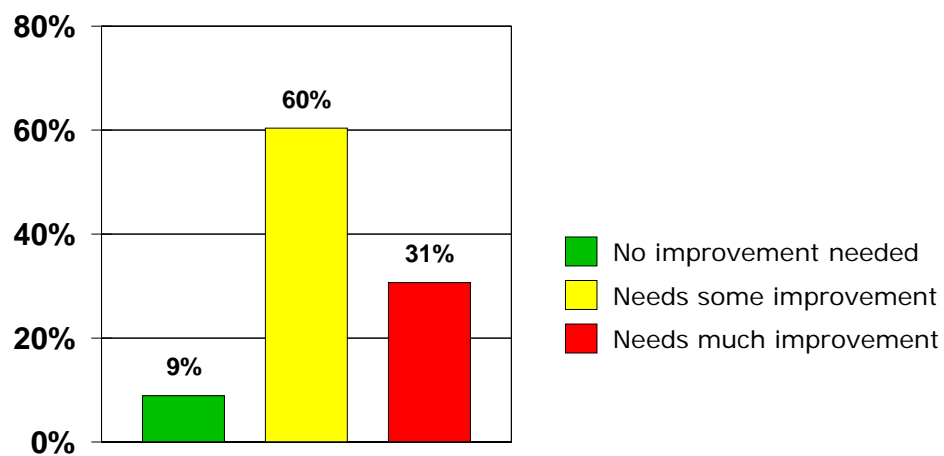
3.2.4 Traffic congestion

Please tell us which area of the environment in and around Belfast you feel needs improvement:
"Traffic congestion"



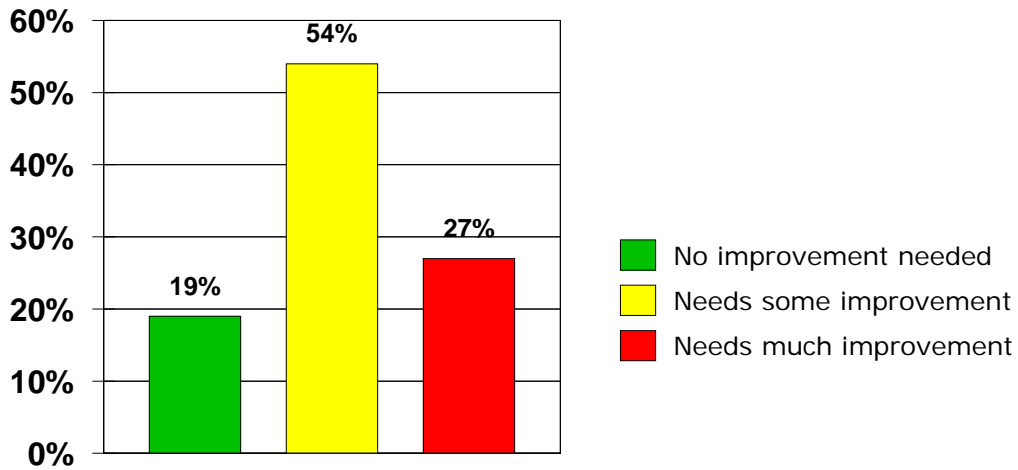
3.2.5 Air quality

Please tell us which area of the environment in and around Belfast you feel needs improvement:
"Air quality"



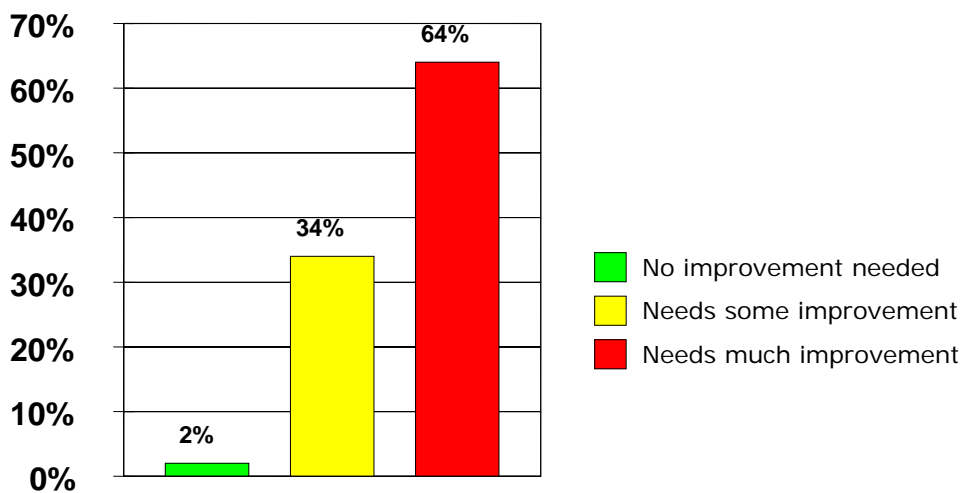
3.2.6 Noise pollution

Please tell us which area of the environment in and around Belfast you feel needs improvement:
"Noise pollution"



3.2.7 Waste management

Please tell us which area of the environment in and around Belfast you feel needs improvement:
"Waste management"



3.3 Conclusion

The survey indicates that 66% of all respondents think that traffic congestion needs the most attention. Waste management is second with 64%. Litter was also highlighted as problem in Belfast and its surrounding areas.

50% of all businesses questioned indicated the cleanliness of the city needs improvement.

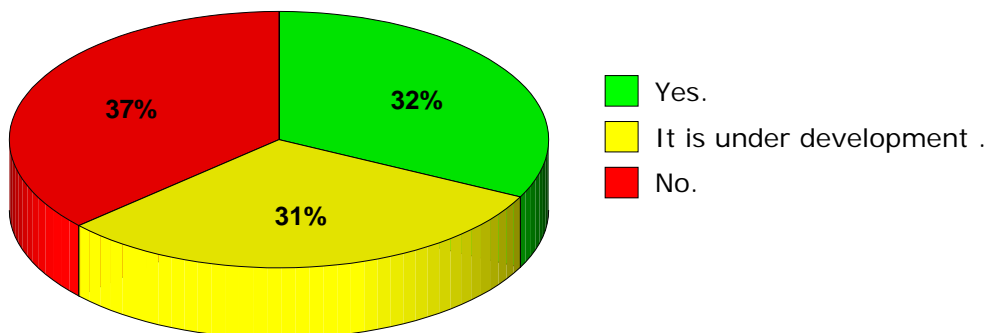
4 Environmental policies of businesses

4.1 Introduction

In this section we tried to find out more about businesses' environmental attitudes. We wanted to know if businesses have environmental policies or if they have an accredited environmental management system (EMS).

We were keen to know if employers thought an environmental policy influenced the businesses' employees, especially on their environmental behaviour at work, or at home.

Does your business have an environmental policy?

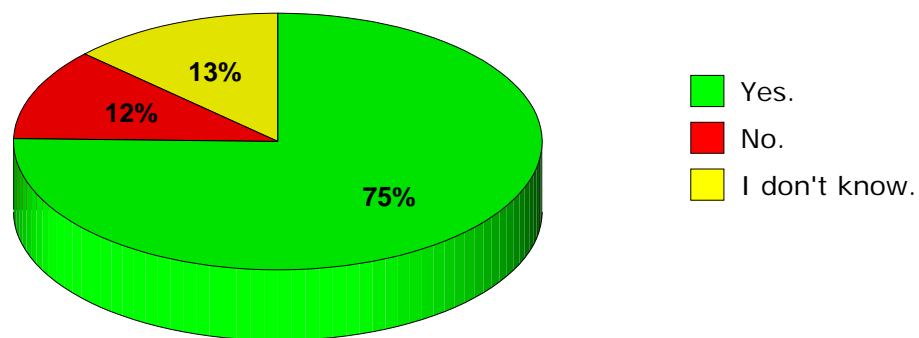


Almost a third (32%) of businesses that responded have an environmental policy. Another third (31%) are developing one, while the remaining businesses (37%) do not have an environmental policy.

4.2 Influence of an environmental policy on employees' environmental attitude

4.2.1 At work

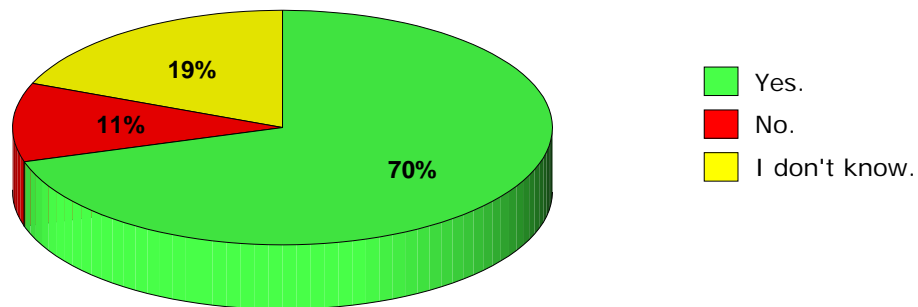
Do you think that an environmental policy has, or could have a positive influence on your employees' attitudes towards environmental responsibility at work?



Three-quarters (75%) of all businesses surveyed felt that having an environmental policy in place has, or could have a positive influence on employees' environmental performance at work.

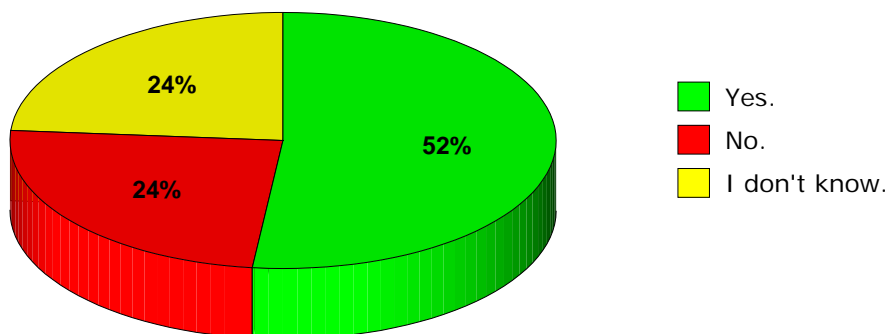
4.2.2 At home

Do you think that an environmental policy has, or could have a positive influence on your employees' attitudes towards environmental responsibility at home?



4.3 Employees' expectations of environmental improvements in business

Do you think that your employees expect continuing improvements in the environmental performance of your business?



More than 50% of the respondents think their employees expect continuing improvements of the businesses' environmental performances.

4.4 Conclusion

A third of all businesses questioned have an environmental policy while another third are currently developing one. In many businesses new staff are given training on the environmental policy.

Most of the environmental policies focus on achieving good waste management and recycling practices.

Some businesses surveyed had more advanced environmental policies. These policies included procedures to save water and energy as well.

This indicates that to many businesses an environmental performance simply means having recycling facilities in place. However, a modern environmental policy should contain environmental policies and guidance on:

- waste management and recycling systems,
- energy use,
- water consumption, and
- travel to work.

There are many more areas of responsibility that could be added to this list but each policy has to fit with the size, type and culture of the business. It's important the policy is realistic and possible for the organisation to comply with.

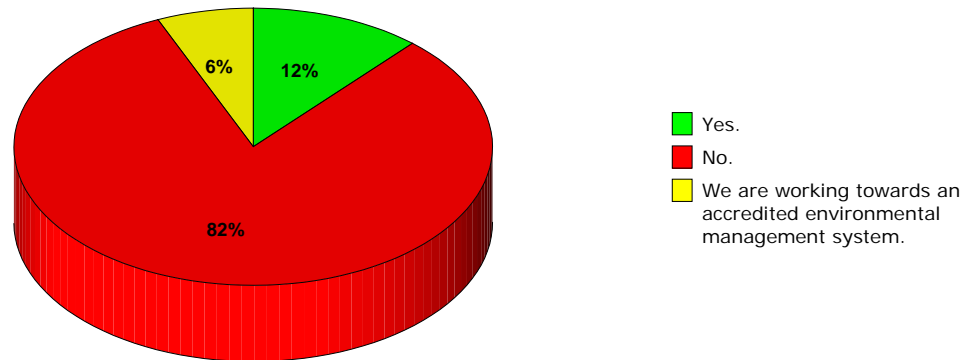
5 Accredited environmental management system (EMS)

What is an EMS?

An environmental management system is a structured and documented management system that helps businesses to organise their environmental performance and responsibilities. By using an EMS you can minimise environmental liabilities, improve the efficiency of your business, increase the staff's awareness of environmental topics, build or rebuild the image or reputation of a business and become more socially responsible.

The most well known EMS's are ISO 14001 and Green Dragon BS 8555.

Does your business have an accredited environmental management system such as ISO 14001 or Green Dragon?



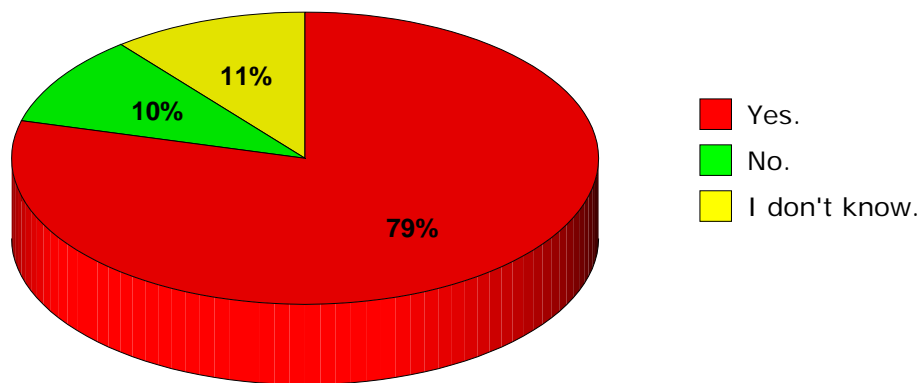
Very few (12%) of the Belfast businesses that responded had an accredited EMS, while 6% were working towards an accreditation. Most businesses (82%) do not have an EMS.

6 Environmental performance

This part of the study focused on the environmental performances of businesses. The main thrust of the questioning was on businesses' potential to improve their environmental practices and the barriers that prevented them improving these practices. We asked if costs, staff resources or lack of environmental knowledge stop businesses improving their environmental performances. The questions also examined if the current recession is affecting environmental performances.

6.1 Potential of environmental improvements

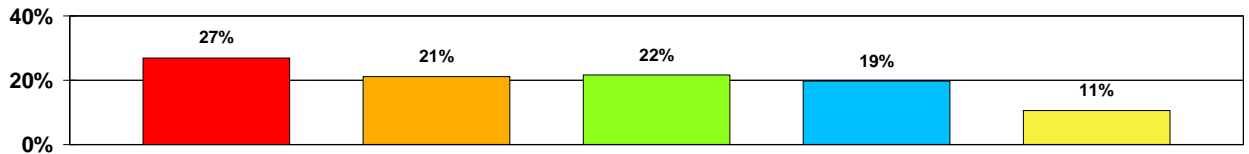
Do you think your business can improve its environmental performance?



Even though, many of the majority of businesses surveyed (79%) recognise the potential environmental improvements that could be made in their business many don't act because of barriers listed in paragraph 6.2.

6.2 Current barriers to improving environmental performances

Which of the following barriers are preventing you from improving your environmental performance?



- Insufficient financial resources.
- Insufficient staff resources.
- Lack of knowledge regarding environmental management practices.
- Not seen as a priority.
- Other reasons

Insufficient financial resources are the biggest barrier stopping the businesses surveyed from improving their environmental performance (27%). Most of the businesses questioned (86%) are small businesses where there is no budget available for environmental issues or to employ environmental managers.

Lack of knowledge on environmental management practices is another problem for businesses wanting to improve environmentally (22%).

We asked businesses if they had the knowledge to improve their environmental performance, or if they would have sufficient staff resources to use this knowledge.

In response to this 21% of businesses said they did not have the staff resources to improve their environmental practices. They either expect environmental staff, or sufficient numbers of staff to manage the associated workload.

Almost one fifth (19%) of all businesses questioned did not regard improving their environmental performance as a priority.

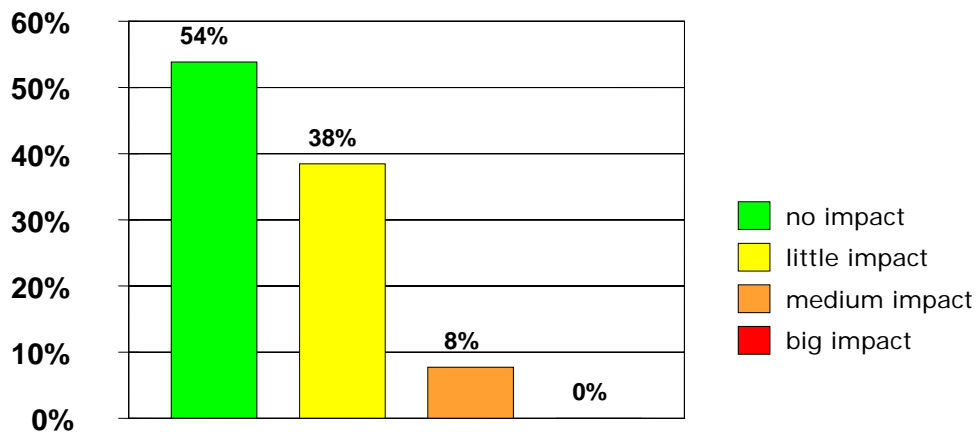
The survey also provided businesses the option to add additional barriers not listed in the question.

Below are some of the reasons businesses gave for not improving their environmental performance:

We rent an office in a big building. The heating and air conditioning are centrally controlled. It is not possible to control the heating for our office alone. We have to open the window to cool down and cannot turn the heating down. We have the same problem with lights and because of this it is very difficult to save energy.
Although we would like to become more environmentally responsible our initiatives lack Senior Management support.
Our company's main office is in London and we have 12 regional offices all providing different services, so it is very difficult to coordinate one overarching policy. We do what we can at individual offices.
We always try to improve, but there is usually an environmental cost (such as waste of existing structures and materials), so we do this only as part of a general upgrade - there will always be more to do.
Possible improvements are relatively minor and fairly expensive.
Our office does not have enough recycling facilities.
We would like to recycle our glass but cannot get anyone to take it away.
We do not have enough staff or money to recycle.
As far as we know we fulfil all our obligations on waste.
Lack of low-cost flexible service for recycling non-confidential paper.
Always room for improvements.
There is a lack of recycling facilities, collection of recyclable materials from Belfast City Council.
As a bank we need paper records so we must print a lot of paper.
We do not have enough room inside for additional recycling containers. To store these outside would give the potential for vandalism or theft of the blue bin.
We just do not have time to do anything about it.
The recycling initiatives for businesses in Belfast are poor.
There has been a slow response by NI Environment Agency to new ideas or recycling synergies.
We do not have enough knowledge and do not feel it will help our business.
We would like to do more but this is not supported by buyers, especially in the public sector. They do not give preference to responsible suppliers even when other factors are comparable.
Insufficient guidance, advice and information from local government on services available to businesses for waste removal, for example blue or brown bin collection, confidential shredding and recycling of office equipment.
Insufficient free recycling collection services.

6.3 Impact of the current recession on future environmental improvements of businesses

How much does the current recession impact on the environmental performance of your business? Please indicate the level of impact:



Over half of all businesses questioned (54%) did not think the current recession would impact on future improvements of their environmental performance.

More than a third of respondents (38%) felt it would have a little impact. However, 8% forecast they will cut their environmental budget because of the recession.

Manufacturing and construction businesses cited energy costs and limited bank lending as factors that limit the availability of resources for environmental improvements. However, service sector businesses did not expect the recession to impact on their spend on environmental improvements.

Businesses did acknowledge their duty of remaining environmentally responsible during the financial crisis.

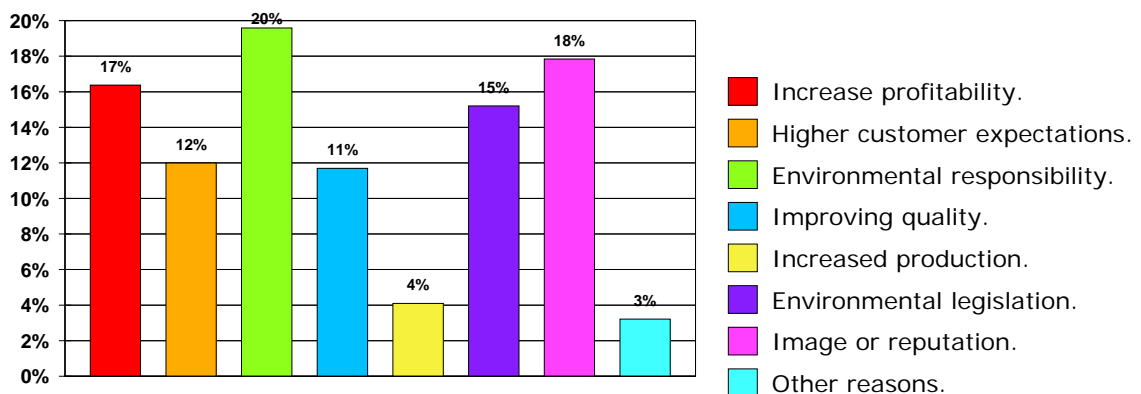
6.4 Conclusion

Lack of recycling facilities, insufficient staff resources, coordination problems between main and local offices, costs, knowledge gaps and insufficient environmental direction from the government were factors preventing companies from improving their environmental performance.

During the face-to-face interviews businesses chose the “lack of financial resources” option regularly. Costs are a very big issue, especially for small businesses, and must be considered very carefully before committing to any environmental investments.

6.5 Motivating factors for improving the environmental performance of a business

What would encourage you to improve the environmental performance of your business?



Reasons like “taking environmental responsibility” (20%) or “image or reputation” (18%) tend to motivate business to improve their environmental performance. Environmental legislation is also a motivator for many of the respondents (15%).

Until recently it was common for businesses to only change their practices because they had to comply with environmental legislation. However, this survey shows that businesses are now starting to take responsibility for the environment.

Image and reputation is becoming more important. Businesses improve their environmental performances not only because of

legislation, but because they feel they should do their part for the environment too.

The survey also provided businesses the option to add additional motivating factors not listed in the question.

Below are some of the reasons businesses gave for improving their environmental performance:

Help from local authorities - As a small business we don't have time to go looking for recycling information - they need to target schools and encourage recycling.
It would need to be cheaper and easier to choose the 'greener' option. It is still about the bottom line and if it costs more to get the environmental option then it is unlikely to happen. We have to make the business case every time and cost is usually the key factor.
Better waste collection policies and pricing from Belfast City Council would encourage us to recycle.
More accessible services - for example recycling.
Staff buy-in and support.
We do not believe we could do much more than we already do.
We would recycle more if facilities were improved.
Educate students on good environmental practice.
Increased awareness of council environment recycling facilities or practices and more financial resources.
Knowing that it wasn't in vain that it would be supported by the public sector giving weighting in tenders to responsible businesses.
Improved services and support from local government.
Monetary assistance to implement any changes required.

Conclusion:

Motivating factors such as local recycling facilities, staff buy-in and more financial support for environmental issues were all cited as key to helping businesses improve their environmental practices.

6.6 Current challenges, threats and problems facing Northern Ireland businesses regarding their environmental performances

The face-to-face interviews showed costs are one of the biggest problems affecting businesses environmental performances. Businesses are especially concerned about the possible increases in water and electricity prices. The current recession is seen as a big challenge and many small businesses simply want to survive it.

EU legislation is perceived as a challenge, rather than as a threat. Many businesses think that this legislation is necessary to meet environmental targets, and are convinced that many would not try to improve their environmental practices without the pressure of legislation. Less than half of the businesses surveyed are worried about possible penalties which could affect them financially.

In the face-to-face interviews another big challenge has arisen. Many see the personal attitudes of owners and managers as a big barrier to implementing environmental changes. To become more environmentally friendly the public must be better informed and see a personal advantage, otherwise they may not be willing to change old habits.

Businesses mentioned the challenge to be faced with the inconvenience of environmental improvement. The businesses emphasised that it needs to be made very easy and convenient to improve your environmental performance.

However, there is a more effective way to encourage businesses to change their habits. Fees and charges for behaving in a non-environmentally friendly way could be introduced. For example, in Switzerland the public are charged for every bag of waste they dispose of which will be incinerated afterwards. They are not charged to dispose of their recycled waste and so they recycle as much as they can to save money.²

The same principle could cut down the amount of plastic bags used in grocery and clothes stores every day. If the plastic bags weren't offered for free, or sold at a higher price, people would rather bring their own reusable bags with them.

The face-to-face interviews showed that businesses see the amount of packaging we use in Northern Ireland as a big problem. If this problem is to be addressed the packaging industry would need to become more environmentally responsible. If the amount of packaging produced, used and thrown away was reduced it would have a positive impact on our levels of waste in Northern Ireland as well.

6.7 What businesses are doing to improve their environmental performances?

² The Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy 2006-2020; www.ni-environment.gov.uk; chapter 1.3; page 25.

The survey asked for additional comments and below are some of the comments businesses made on the environmental performances and initiatives of businesses:

<p>We took part in a carbon footprint project which involved getting an audit of our building done and then installing things like double glazing and energy efficient light bulbs and erecting a suspended ceiling. We feel this has made a difference.</p>
<p>Our school has been trying to get insulation installed to make it more energy efficient but there are no grants available for this and the Education and Library Board does not have funding available. We would like councils to provide facilities for recycling our waste and to be proactive about promoting it. We would recycle more if we were provided with onsite facilities.</p>
<p>We are the Belfast subsidiary of a large organisation. We find it either expensive or difficult to find services that can help us meet our environmental responsibilities. Waste disposal is a big issue - we pay to have paper recycled but can't find a service to handle our other recyclables. Currently a staff member is taking waste home or to the local civic amenity sites.</p> <p>We would like the council to develop a SME waste management package. Are there other small businesses that want to improve environmentally?</p>
<p>We only recycle paper at the moment.</p>
<p>We have carried out an environmental audit and available measures include changing CRT screens to LCD screens, having motion detectors for lights and ensuring all equipment turned off at night.</p>
<p>We have some staff committed to better environmental working practices and some not. Staff buy-in is difficult to achieve and therefore change is hard to implement. Also the NI structures don't always help – for example less advanced public transport infrastructure.</p>
<p>We already recycle many materials.</p>
<p>We are currently planning to transform our offices into an environmentally sustainable demonstration project with renewable energy, to be visited by clients and others using locally designed and produced equipment. We hope to start work on this during summer 2009 if finances are available.</p>
<p>Our waste oil, filters, batteries and refuse are collected by accredited companies.</p>
<p>We try to use less heating and lighting when possible. This is because our bill is much too high. Solar panelling would be an option, if affordable.</p>
<p>We take our environmental responsibilities very seriously and continually seek to improve our own procedures and those of our suppliers.</p>
<p>All staff members ride bicycles to work or take the bus. Although</p>

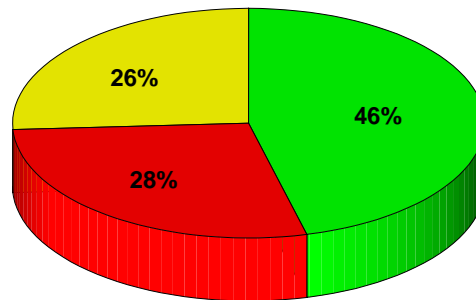
we recycle envelopes and use scrap paper for note taking and generally are all environmentally aware we do not separate office waste into rubbish and recyclable materials as we would have no way of having this collected.
As an architect I believe it is our responsibility to design energy efficient buildings.
We recycle paper where possible and try to maintain an efficient business using all our resources with as little waste as possible. We mostly recycle waste products such as paper and cardboard.
We try to turn off lights when they are not needed.
We recycle all old ink cartridges and waste paper. We currently recycle our paper and cardboard waste through a private commercial company.
Part of our global strategy is to implement good environmental activities to contribute to the reduction of our environmental footprint. We do this because it shows we have a good corporate social responsibility policy and it helps to meet customer expectations regarding sourcing and use of raw materials. This all helps market our product as a net contributor to managing climate change. (Michelin)
We have implemented hundreds of initiatives including ISO 141001, FSC, PEFC, Carbon Neutral Recycling, and Alcohol Free printing to name a few. Moving towards sustainability is a priority for us as we believe we will need environmental accreditations to be trading 10, 20 or 30 years from now.

Businesses across Belfast have said they making the following changes to help them improve their environmental performance:

- Using energy saving bulbs.
- Installing lights with activity sensors.
- Switching off all computer screens before leaving the office.
- Installing modernised flush toilets to avoid water wastage.
- Operating a good recycling system.
- Using renewable energy.
- Buying Fairtrade coffee.
- Refilling print cartridges.
- Holding video conferences in stead of driving or flying to meetings.
- Electronic communication rather sending letters or flyers
- Insulating the building.
- Upgrading heating systems.
- Using reusable cups for the water dispenser.
- ISO 14001.

6.8 Resource efficiency

Do you believe that your business can become more profitable by improving its resource efficiency?



■ Yes.

■ No.

■ I don't know.

Almost 50% of all businesses think they would become more profitable if they improved their resource efficiency.

7 Environmental marketing

7.1 Examples of businesses' environmental initiatives and performances

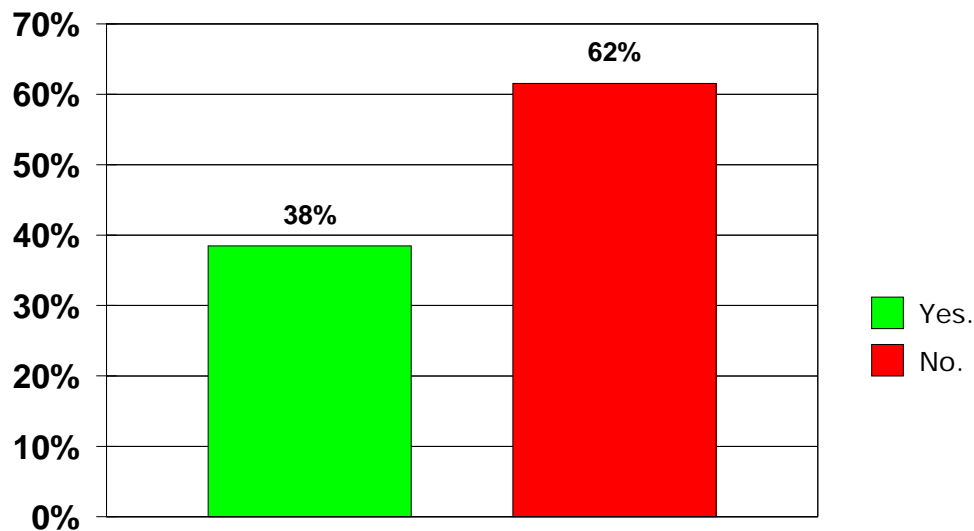
Big businesses like IKEA, Michelin Tyres, Starbucks or McDonalds show you can use your green credentials to help sell your products or services.

With sophisticated advertising and promotion positive environmental behaviour can influence consumer habits. IKEA is an advocate of the green business model and has had success with several campaigns showcasing its environmental efforts.

During the face-to-face interviews, 13 businesses were asked about their attitude towards environmental marketing.

The questionnaire has gave the following result:

Do you advertise the environmental performances and initiatives of your business?



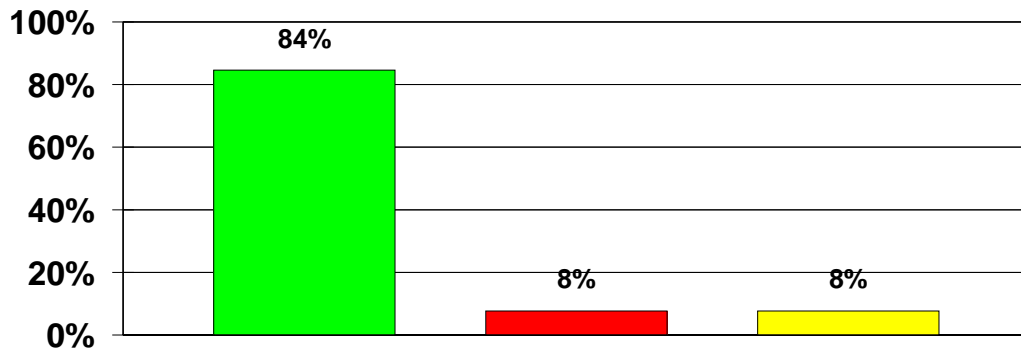
Only 38% of all businesses questioned mentioned their environmental efforts in their marketing activities. While 62% of businesses do not make any reference to the environment in the marketing promotions at all.

Businesses in the industrial sector promote their businesses in industry magazines and special newspapers. Many businesses also said they used their website to promote their environmental initiatives.

Restaurants and coffee shops publish changes to their environmental policies (such as using organic or locally grown food, if they use recycled paper, sell fair-trade coffee and so on) with notes on their menus or walls.

7.2 Do businesses see any benefits in promoting their environmental marketing techniques?

Do you see any benefits of promoting of the environmental performances of your business?



■ Yes.

■ No.

■ Usually yes but not now during the current recession.

The majority of businesses questioned see a benefit in using environmental marketing techniques.

Businesses said they felt that using marketing to promote their environmental practices or achievements improved the business's image and influenced buyer behaviour. They said buying products or services from environmentally responsible businesses gave customers a certain feel-good-factor by doing their bit for the environment.

Businesses felt that by promoting their environmental practices they show the public that they have good resource and waste management policies. But businesses also indicated that promoting accreditations such as ISO 14001 does not benefit the business financially as many people don't know what it is exactly or just don't care about it.

Customers who are more environmentally aware place increased importance on the business's environmental performance, and this influences their buying behaviour. For example, at Easter some producers offer Easter eggs with 25% less packaging. This feature

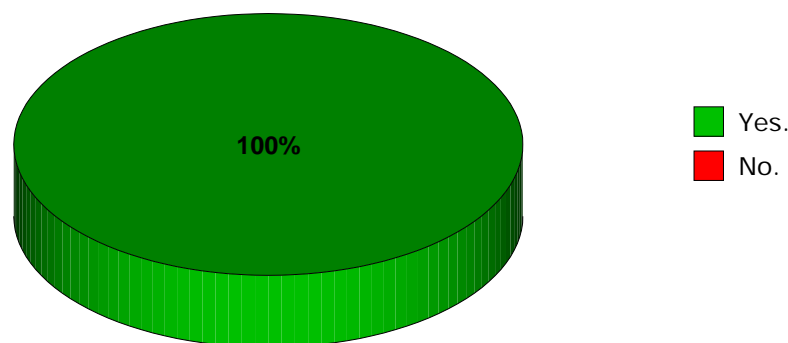
is clearly advertised on the egg, influencing those who consider packaging to be a contributor to global warming, climate change and so on.

7.3 Reward for buying environmentally friendly products

If a reward for buying environmentally friendly products was introduced it would allow people to collect points with a purchase which could be used again in-store. It would be similar to the current store loyalty cards which exist, but would provide rewards for more environmentally conscious customers.

The survey asked businesses for their views on providing reward points for buying environmentally friendly products.

Do you think a reward for buying environmentally friendly products would stimulate a change in current consumer habits?



Businesses responded by stating that they think people are influenced mostly by costs. If there are rewards available for buying environmentally friendly products they will buy them.

By receiving reward points customers feel they have get more value for their money. Businesses also felt that people enjoy earning rewards, while doing something good for the environment - a win-win situation.

If the reward was a financial incentive, those who previously couldn't afford to buy environmentally friendly products, could possibly afford them.

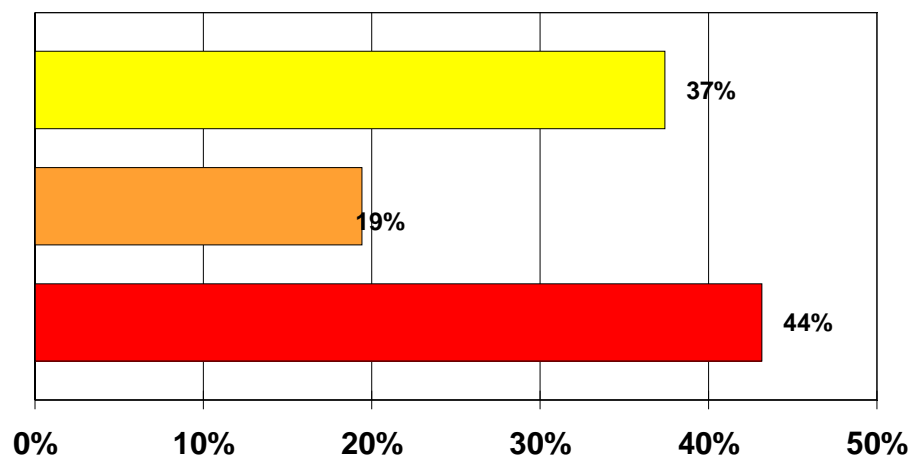
Marketing research shows people like to use loyalty cards, to collect points and use vouchers and so an environmental reward scheme could make people think and act differently, leading to a change in their mind-sets. However, it is important to remember that to run a reward scheme successful comprehensive and efficient Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems are needed, and regular maintenance of these would be essential.

The businesses that responded to our survey were confident an environmental reward system would stimulate a change in consumer habits.

8 Environmental impacts of products, materials and waste used and produced in business

8.1 Origin of businesses' products and raw materials

Do you know where the products and raw materials that your business uses come from?



Yes.

No.

I rely on my suppliers to source products and raw materials.

This question asks businesses if they know where their products and raw materials come from.

To be environmentally responsible it's very important to know the origin of materials you use. This includes knowing how they are harvested or produced and how they are transported to the businesses.

This is part of a business value chain management – a business cannot claim to be corporately socially responsible if its suppliers employ practices which conflict with this, and likewise they cannot claim to be environmentally responsible if their suppliers are not.

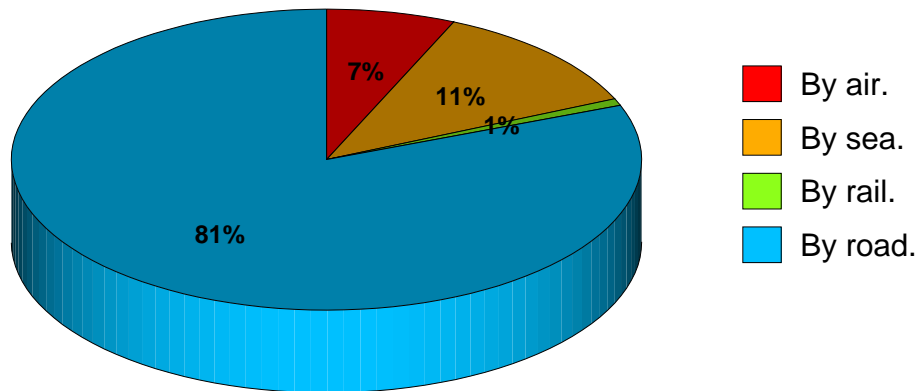
If businesses are aware of the origins of their raw materials it is then possible to influence their sustainability. By being aware of how products reach the business, how they are sourced, how far they have travelled, businesses can accurately assess their carbon footprint and employ measures to reduce it.

The survey also highlighted the fact that businesses are not well informed about where all their products come from. They do not know how they are produced or harvested or whether the production process paid attention to sustainability, and almost half of all businesses that responded (44%) rely on their suppliers to source products and raw materials.

Businesses are still very cost focused when choosing a supplier. If they want to take more responsibility for their environmental actions they must manage their value chain effectively by developing environmental criteria to be considered in the supplier selection process.

8.2 Transport of goods

How are your goods mostly transported to you?

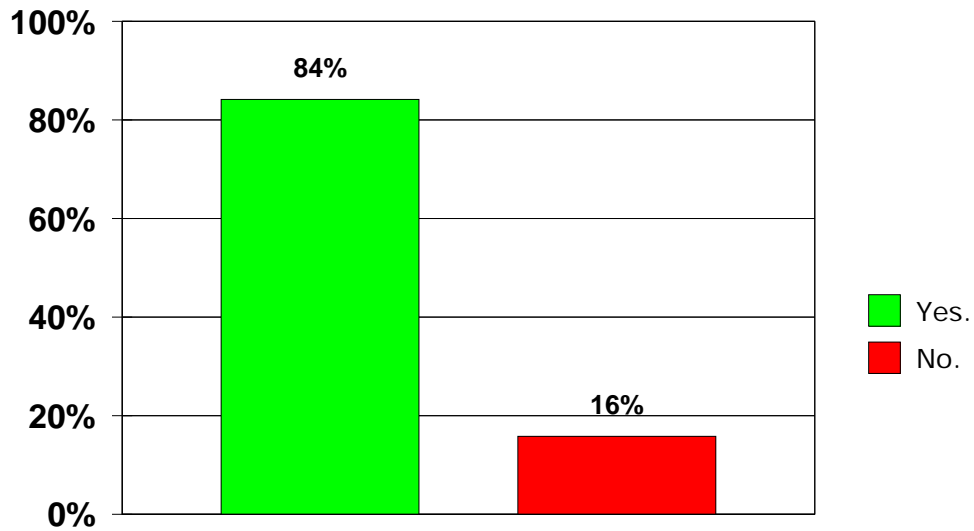


Over four-fifths (81%) of all the respondents said their suppliers or products are transported by road to their premises. Businesses said this was mostly because there was no alternative available to them; rail lines are not available in most parts of the region. However, from an environmental aspect it is better to buying locally produced foods than to import them by air.

8.3 Environmentally friendly products

8.3.1 Using environmentally friendly products in business

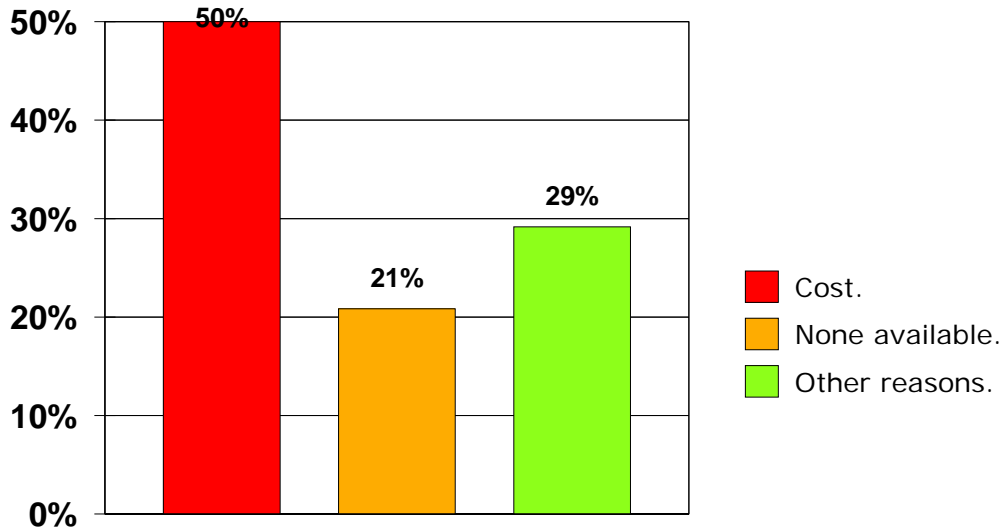
Where possible, do you use environmentally friendly products in your business?



Over three quarters of all businesses questioned (84%) try to use environmentally friendly products, where possible, in their business.

8.3.2 Barriers to using environmentally friendly products in business

If you don't use environmentally friendly products, please tell us why not:



Half of all the businesses that responded (50%) stated that environmentally friendly products are too expensive to be used in their business.

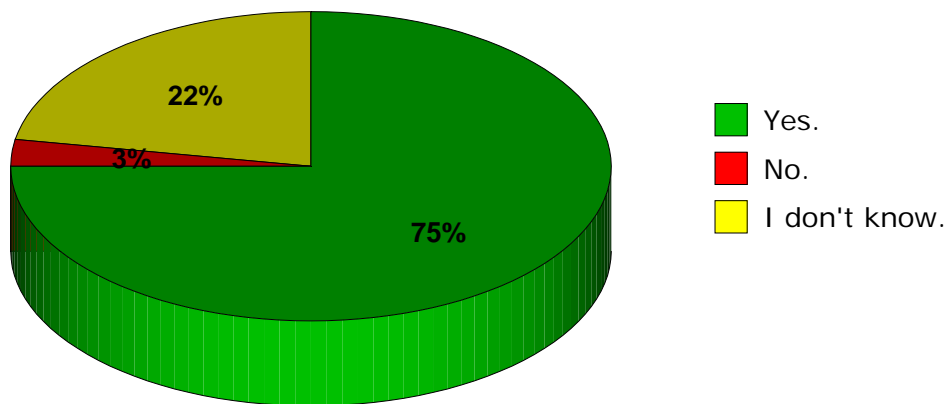
The survey asked for more reasons preventing businesses from using environmentally friendly products. Businesses gave the following reasons:

We do not use any raw materials and the products we use are minimal as we are in the service industry.
Sourcing environmental products is not an issue for our business - we buy in and sell on.
We do not use recycled paper as we feel it is not as good quality as new paper.
Using environmentally friendly products is not a priority for us.
We do not know enough about the subject and do not have time to research environmentally friendly products.
We don't sell products as we are in the financial services sector and the bulk of our business is conducted over the internet.
We do not use environmentally friendly products as they generally cost more.

9 Energy

9.1 Future oil and gas resources

Do you think that global oil and gas resources will eventually be used up?



Three quarters of all the respondents (75%) felt that our oil and gas resources will be exhausted in the future. Only 3% do not agree with this statement while 22% don't know what will happen to our resources.

9.2 Renewable energy in Northern Ireland

Most of Northern Ireland's electricity is imported. It is derived from the European Energy Exchange (EEX) and is produced from oil, gas, coal (fossil fuels) and nuclear power. Because of its connection to the European energy market local electricity is subject to frequent price fluctuations.

Approximately 3-4% of all domestic electricity used in Northern Ireland is renewable or green energy and is derived from wind farms, solar photovoltaic cells and water power.

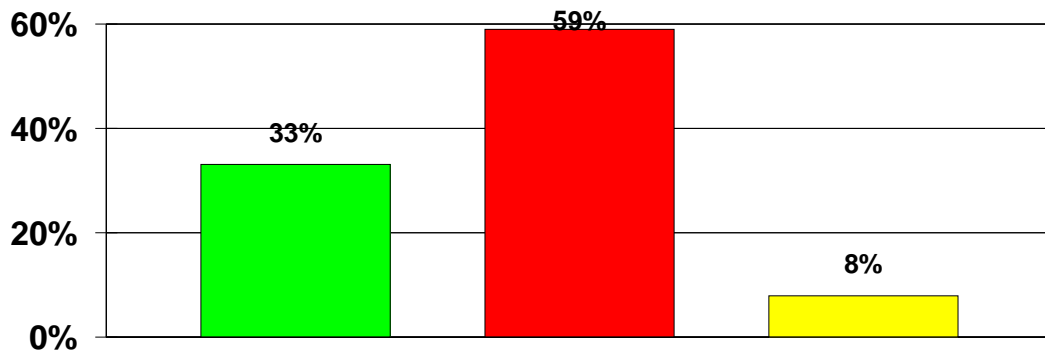
By using green electricity businesses can save money, as it costs less than energy derived from fossil fuels or nuclear power.

There are only a few renewable energy suppliers in Northern Ireland, including Airtricity, Firmus Energy or ESBIE which deliver green electricity to businesses

The change to green or eco energy is very easy and can be done online. Buildings changing to green electricity do not require any alterations as green electricity will be supplied using the building's existing energy infrastructure.

9.3 Willingness to change to green electricity

Have you considered using renewable energy (such as green electricity) for your business?



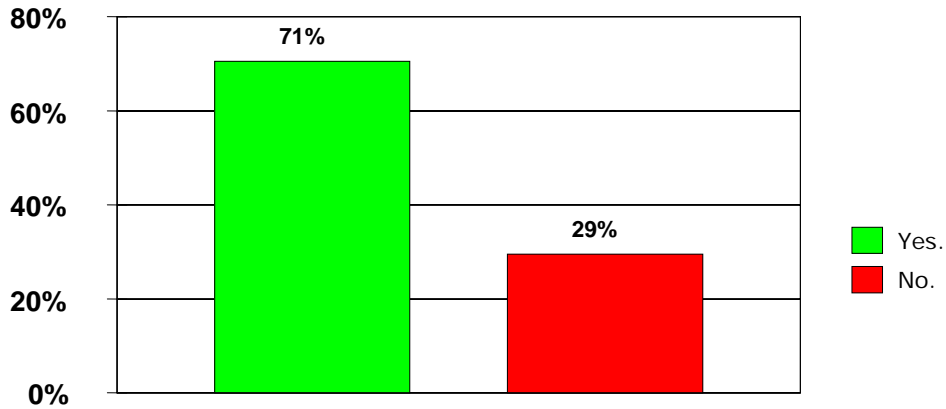
- Yes.
- No.
- I am already using renewable energy for my business.

Changing to renewable energy supply is not a priority for 59% of the survey's respondents, while 8% of the respondents are already using green electricity.

Given the current economic climate most businesses are trying to make efficiency savings and switching to green electricity is one way businesses could save money.

9.4 Saving electricity in business

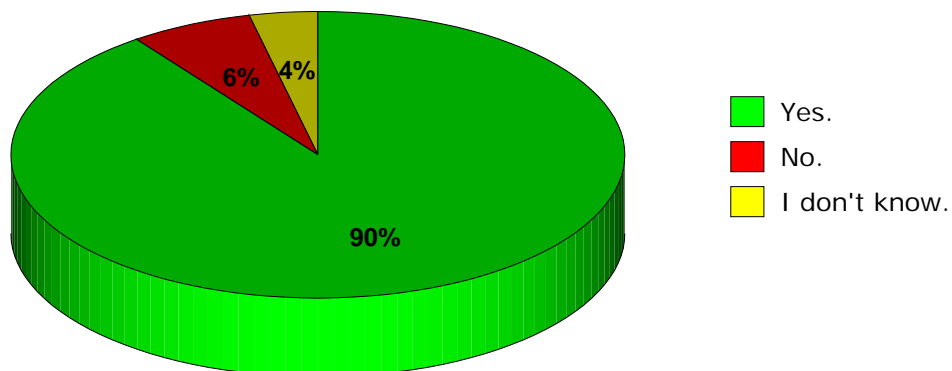
Do you try to save energy in your business
(for example using energy-saving bulbs, lights with activity sensors)?



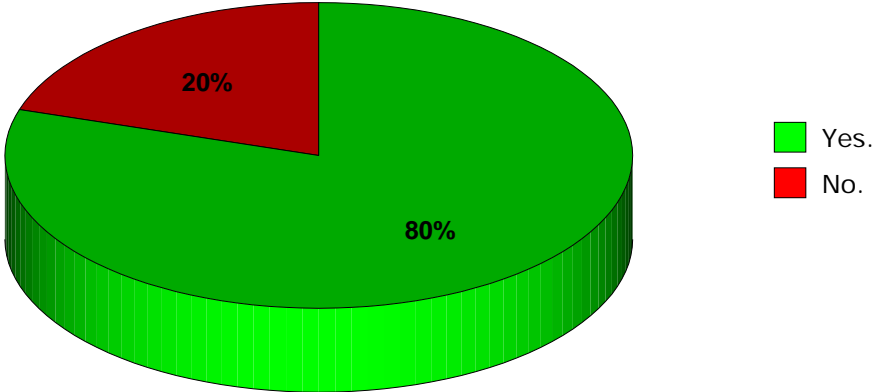
Almost three quarters of all the businesses that responded to our survey (71%) try to save energy. They use energy saving bulbs, lights with activity sensors and switch off all computer screens in night times.

10 Water

Do you think that it is important to use water efficiently in your business?



Do you try to save water in your business?



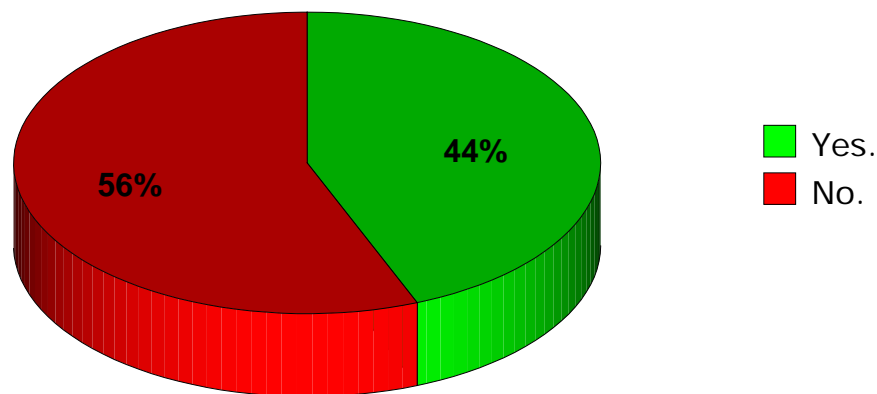
Most of the businesses surveyed (90%) acknowledged the importance of saving water in their business and 80% of them are already trying to save water.

Businesses with higher environmental standards modernise their facilities and equipment regularly and have machines or systems which use water more efficiently.

11 Waste

11.1 Belfast City Council's commercial recycling collection service

Do you use the council's commercial recycling collection service?



Almost half of all the businesses that responded to our survey (44%) use our recycling collection service.

We asked those who did not use our recycling collection service why they don't use it and they gave the reasons below:

As far as I know they do not collect in the city centre. If this has changed I would definitely use the service.
We are a care home – our waste would contain soiled products and there is a risk of contamination if our yellow waste bags were put in the council bins. Although if given a blue recycling bin we would use it.
It is more cost effective to use private sector providers.
We produce so little waste it is not worthwhile.
We were not aware this service existed.
It is too expensive.
We didn't know about it; we pay a private company to collect and recycle.
We do not think we generate enough waste.
Education and Library Boards collect and dispose of anything we can't put in normal bin.

I have considered using it but it would mean another euro bin and we have two already.
We have made requests before and found council very uncooperative.
I haven't been informed about this service.
I have tried to contact them several times, been passed along endless switchboards and got nowhere. If there was a well run recycling service we would sign up immediately.
I recycle my own.
I use the recycling depot off Kennedy Way every Sunday, both for recycling and for rubbish from both my office and my home.
It is costly to transport the material to this site. Need more information on it. We are a charity and if there is a cost that could be problematic.
No collection service available, waste taken away by skip.
No idea where it is and we feel that the effort required to sort waste would cost the company money.
Not a free service
Not available for our type of waste.
Not enough waste, 11 employees who generate household waste, bottles and cans. Our type of business does not produce vast quantities of waste.
Not necessary - we take waste to council amenity site.
Our building's management company deals with this.
Our waste was not being collected regularly.
The council's recycling service collects bins before regular business opening times. In the past when we put the bin out at night it was burnt out. Also some collections were not made.
Too expensive for a tiny company. We don't even fill a normal wheel bin each week so we don't need a weekly collection of both normal and recycled waste.
Unaware any recycling initiative. Feel businesses are charged too much for rates and bin collections.
We use the company that does our storage.
I was led to believe Weavers Court does that but not sure now. Surprised there is no blue bin scheme - I take our blue bin waste home to my domestic bin in Dungannon!
Our waste disposal is handled by our landlord.
We are currently trying to arrange a Bryson Recycling bin. We were not aware that the council scheme is suitable for such a small business.
We did but the service was so poor we entered into a contract with a private company.
We don't have enough space for a black bin and a blue bin in our small office. If left outside the bins are stolen or burned.
We work with one waste partner - ISL Ltd of Mallusk,

Newtownabbey for all waste streams.

We would only require this on an occasional basis and I believe the service is a regular contracted service.

When we started using Bryson Recycling the council did not offer this service.

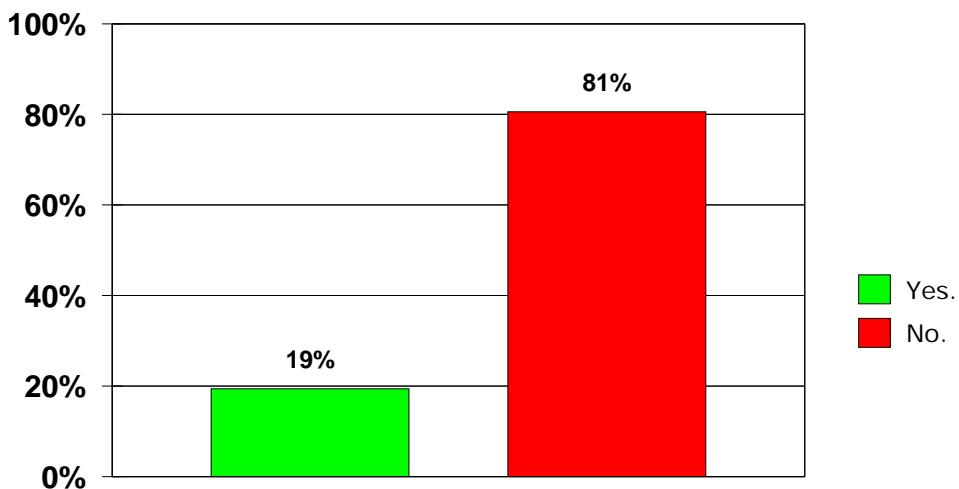
Over 35% of businesses questioned during the face-to-face interviews were not aware the council had a commercial waste recycling collection service.

A targeted awareness campaign is needed to publicise the service and to highlight the cost savings available by using this service.

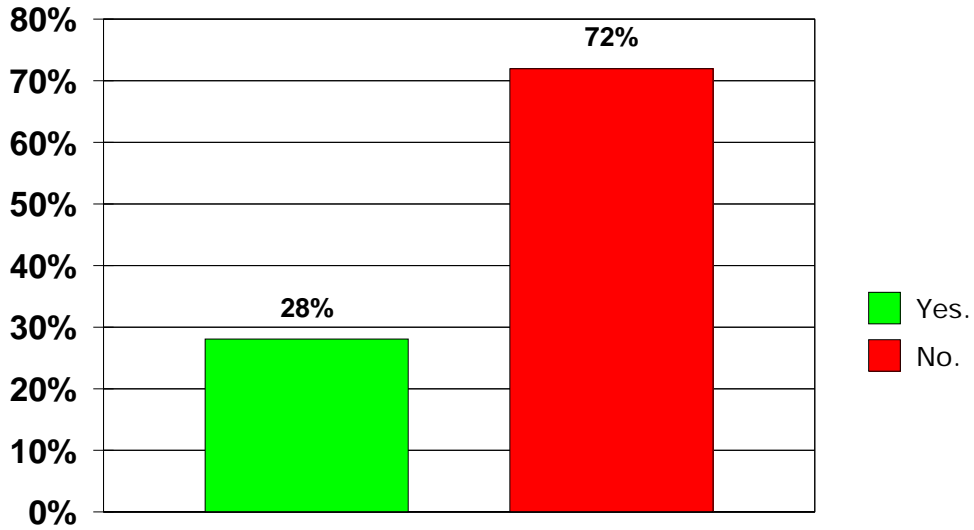
11.2 Current waste management practices

With following questions the survey focuses in business' knowledge of waste management.

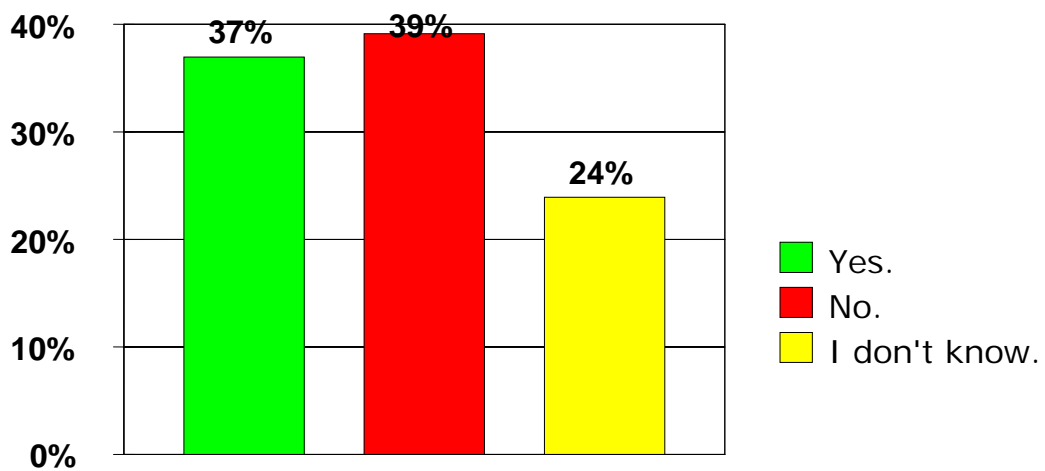
Do you know how much waste your business produces?



Do you know how much your business waste costs to handle and dispose of?



Do you think you can increase profitability by improving the way you handle your business waste (for example reducing, reusing, recycling)?



11.3 Conclusion

Disposal of commercial waste is an expensive cost to businesses. However, as landfill taxes increase businesses can make efficiency savings by employing a comprehensive waste management policy which includes a good recycling system.

Most of the businesses that responded to our survey (81%) don't know how much waste their business produces, and 72% don't know how much it costs to dispose of.

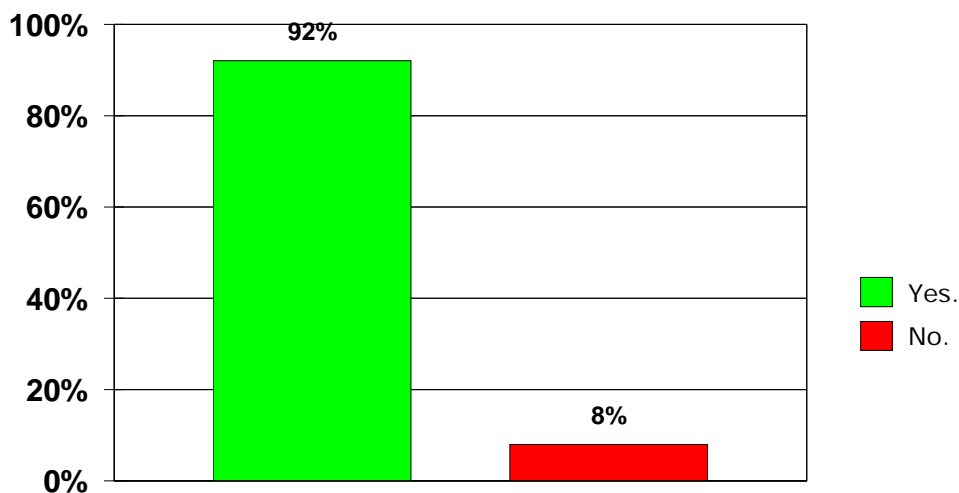
This shows that there is big potential for improvement in the area of waste management and recycling in businesses in Belfast and well developed waste management policies would help reach this potential.

12 Environmental advice service

We are considering launching an environmental advice point where the public can call for advice and support on all environmental issues.

12.1 Willingness to using the environmental advice service

If the council provided an environmental advice point, would you use it?



Most of the businesses surveyed (92%) said they would use an environmental advice point if we provided it.

The face-to-face interviews showed a very positive reaction to this concept, with many saying it would help them get the information they needed on environmental issues.

The respondents who would not use the service gave the following reasons for their answers:

- environmental issues are not seen as a priority for the business,
- no need for action for improve their current environmental performance, and
- scepticism in the quality of the information provided.

12.2 Which type of service would businesses prefer: personalised service or a sign-posted advice point?

We are also investigating whether businesses would prefer to use a personalised advice service or a sign-posted advice point.

The personalised advice service would involve council staff visiting businesses to provide tailored environmental information. While a sign-posting advice point would provide businesses with links to information and agencies which could help them improve their environmental practices.

It is likely that a personalised service would prove costly to the council and some of these costs would need to be met by the customer.

The survey showed that both services were welcomed by the business community. But businesses mostly preferred the personalised service option and they said they would be willing to pay for it, providing the service could meet their needs. They felt they would prefer to speak with an advisor on a face-to-face basis. Older members of the business community said they would opt for the face-to-face option as they were not confident using the internet.

Those who opted for the sign-posting service were happy to have an address where they could get some help or download information about a specific environmental issue.

13 Conclusion

Our survey showed clearly that businesses acknowledge the existence of climate change; some supported the theory of man-made climate change, while others believe in the natural cycle explanation for it. Around 80% of the businesses that responded agreed the human intervention leads to a change in our climate and may have a detrimental impact on Northern Ireland.

The businesses that responded to our survey seemed to be quite environmentally conscious with over two-thirds having or working towards an environmental policy. Also, around 70% of the respondents thought an environmental policy could have a positive impact on the environmental behaviour of their staff both at work or at home.

Although many businesses acknowledged the impact their business and consumer habits had on the environment many of them said that there were barriers to improving their environmental performance. The most common barrier was cost and financial resources, while knowledge regarding environmental management practices was also an issue. Although businesses did cite cost as a limiting factor, the majority of businesses (54%) said that the recession will not affect their plan to improve their environmental performances in the future.

Almost three quarters of all businesses that responded are not satisfied with the state of environment in and around Belfast. The areas which they felt needed the most improvement were the cleanliness of the city, waste management and traffic congestion. Litter was also mentioned as a problem, endorsing the suggestion that waste is a problem in Belfast.

The reasons that would encourage businesses to improve their environmental performance are mostly "taking responsibility towards the environment" (20%), "image or reputation" (18%) or to "increase of profitability of the business" (17%). The answers given to the survey showed that businesses not only improve their environmental performances to comply with the EU legislation, but also to take more responsibility for the environment. Businesses act not only because they have to, but because they feel a duty to contribute to the environment, and to improve their image and reputation.

EU legislation is more seen as a challenge than as a threat and accepted as necessary to meet the environmental targets.

When asked what the current environmental challenges, threats and problems facing Northern Ireland private sector are, businesses consistently mentioned the recession. Many small businesses simply want to survive the financial crisis but, as stated earlier, more than half of all businesses said it won't have an impact on future environmental improvements

Most businesses (84%) see benefits of including their environmental performances in their marketing promotion. Almost 40% of all businesses are already promoting their environmental initiatives. They said that the customer gets a certain sense of satisfaction or a "feel-good-factor" when they buy products from environmental friendly businesses.

Most of the businesses that responded felt strongly that a reward for buying environmentally friendly products could have a positive impact on current consumer habits. They believe most people are driven by cost, and if there was a reward for buying environmental friendly products, people would buy them.

Under half of the businesses that responded knew the origin of their raw materials and supplies. If a business wants to be corporately socially responsible, they should know the origin of the product and be fully aware of how it is produced and transported to the business. By having this knowledge businesses can influence the environmental performance of suppliers and increase the sustainability of the whole production process.

All the questioned businesses are very motivated to use environmentally friendly products in their business. When asked the reasons they don't use environmentally friendly products 50% indicated "costs" were the main barrier.

Businesses are very concerned about future oil and gas resources. Three-quarters of all business that responded believe the resources will eventually be used up. In spite of this, only 8% of all businesses were using renewable energy, while at least 70% try to save energy and water in their business.

More than 70% of the surveyed businesses don't know how much waste they produce, or how much it cost to dispose of. Many businesses are not aware of the opportunity to save on waste disposal costs by recycling and only 44% of all business use our commercial recycling service.

Looking to the future, businesses welcomed the prospect of a council run environmental advice point. Most businesses said they

would welcome support and information on environmental issues, but would prefer a personalised service, rather than just a sign-posted advice point.

Some businesses count waste management and recycling as the only two factors to be considered in their environmental management system. But an ideal environmental performance consists of much more and has to cover areas like saving energy, water and other resources, the knowledge of the origin of products and raw materials, and the organisation of a sustainable mode of transport for business goods and so on. Businesses should extend their environmental performances to more areas of the business and a dedicated environmental advice could help advice them do this.

Those who took part in the face-to-face interviews also said that any environmental improvements must be easily implemented otherwise they would be reluctant to invest time and effort in them.

Overall our survey showed that businesses in Belfast have a very positive attitude towards the environment. They see the effects of climate change and have identified a need to become more environmentally friendly. They are willing to change old habits and improve their environmental procedures, providing we provide services to help them do this.

14 Recommendations

This was a comprehensive and worthwhile study which took 6-8 months to complete over the winter of 2008-09. It assessed the current opinions and practices of businesses. This information will help us decide if we should develop services which would help meet their their needs and to help them to improve their environmental practices.

From the results and interviews, it was clear that businesses working in and around Belfast would welcome a source of advice on environmental management. In particular, providing information on aspects such as legislative compliance and benchmarking were highlighted as being especially useful.

It was worth noting that we conducted this study after several years of engagement work on environmental projects to assess:

- (1) if there was a requirement for a advice point or otherwise, and
- (2) to determine if this service was provided, would it be used and be valued?

In light of the results, there would be a several benefits to be gained by providing this one stop-shop:

- (1) All businesses know the council and how to get in touch with it.
- (2) Despite the forthcoming Review of Public Administration (RPA) we will continue to be a major player in the provision of public services in Belfast. And, by following examples from elsewhere in the UK, we will have a greater role to play in shaping and assisting local businesses and society, especially on many environmentally-related issues.
- (3) We are well places to gather and distribute information from all the other funding and support agencies.
- (4) We have no commercial interest or need to establish followed sales products.
- (5) The council is an "honest-broker".
- (6) This type service would fit within our Corporate Plan objectives of *"creating a more sustainable city by providing leadership"* and as our Waste Management Service has recently achieved several international standards, it has an obligation to engage with contractors and encourage greater consistency and performance improvement. Extending our service to provide a *"pointer"* service and to assist other businesses would fit well with these requirements.
- (7) As above, could also play a significant role in our emerging *"place-shaping"* agenda, by not only helping businesses to "go green" but also contributing through giving advice to help develop new business service and products.
- (8) These services could be provided on a part-time basis by our Waste Management Service, supported by the freephone telephone contact and through the internet.

The study also identified that businesses had concerns regarding Street Cleansing and Waste Management issues, as well as transport.

The first two recommendations could be addressed or further promoted through our work with other council services (Economic Initiatives and Cleansing Services) to refine their services to meet business needs and expectations.

Further issues, such as transportation, could be framed and presented to existing partnerships within Belfast.

The study highlighted a number of points regarding the introduction and development of EMS's (Environmental Management Systems) within the SME's community in Belfast, and one of our existing partnership products (provided by Waste Management and Economic Initiatives) may already provide a suitable framework to support the "*greening*" of businesses. This product is the BITES programme (Business Improvements Through Environmental Solutions). This programme helps businesses address environmental issues in a structured format.

Through the BITES programme, businesses can identify both cost savings and compliance issues. They also get the opportunity to develop new products or services while improving their image and reputation.

This opportunity for business improvement could be harnessed with such a Council-wide programme as a selling point for the city to demonstrate how it is moving forward into a greener future.

Also, following other examples from Europe and building on our work on Eurocities' "*Greening the Local Economy*" Working Group, further opportunities may exist to develop or refine new or existing council products to incorporate aspects of programmes such as the EcoBusinessPlan. This programme was developed several years ago in Munich and has also been adopted more recently by Vienna.

For example, given the scale, scope and range of initiatives already covered within BITES, this programme could provide a useful plank in expanding the environmental support we could offer to SMEs.

We are working with a number of other EC cities to develop a "*Carbon Card*" which is a type of loyalty card. This card could help Belfast become greener and could be used to further promote changes in behaviour and attitudes to the environment across all segments of society in the city.³

Ultimately business engagement is crucial to the take-up and promotion of this card, and the study indicates that there is a willingness and, in fact, eagerness for such a product. This card could be further developed and refined through working with the

³ The Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy 2006-2020; www.ni-environment.gov.uk; chapter 1.3-1.5; page 25 et seq.

BCCM (Belfast City Centre Management), BCTC (Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce) and other business fora.

As this is our first comprehensive study of this kind, it is important that it be revisited and evaluated in due course if the recommendations are followed.

III. Appendix

Survey characteristics

1 Data

The Snap (Snap 9 professional) survey was emailed to 1,400 businesses in Belfast on the week beginning 15th of December 2008. It was also sent to all local authorities in Northern Ireland. From January 2009 a reminder was sent to the survey sample twice weekly.

To encourage a high response rate we entered each respondent in a draw for a £100 Victoria Square shopping voucher.

We received 144 answers, more than 10% of the total survey sample.

The majority of the respondents were from Belfast based businesses.

To get more qualitative feedback we asked businesses to take part in face-to-face interviews as well. 58 businesses (44% of respondents) agreed to take part in the interview process.

2 Research questions

1. What are the attitudes and behaviours of private businesses towards environmental management and performance?
2. What impact do these attitudes and behaviours have on business performance?
3. What reasons have driven your business to improve its environmental performance?

3 Questionnaire

Survey to identify business attitudes towards climate change, sustainable development and the environment

Please help us better understand the environmental challenges facing local businesses by completing this short online survey.

(section1) About your business:

(Q1) Name of the senior manager in your organisation with responsibility for environmental management practices:

(Q2) Name of your business:

(Q3) Contact details:

(a) Address line 1

(b) Address line 2

(c) Address line 3

(d) Telephone number

(e) Fax number

(f) Email address

(Q4) Please indicate your business sector:

Agriculture including fishing

Manufacturing

Construction

Motor trade

Wholesale

Retail

Hotel and catering

Transport

Post and telecom

Insurance

Finance

Property or business

Education

Health

Public administration

Other

(Q4a) If other please specify:

(Q5) Size of your business

Small (1-49 employees).

Medium (50-249 employees).

Large (>250 employees).

(Section 2) Your views on the environment:

In this section we would like to know what you think about the state of the local and global environment.

(Q6) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

(Please tick: Strongly agree/ agree/ I don't know/ disagree/ strongly disagree).

(a) "Current consumer habits (for example use of purchasing and packaging, transport, energy, disposal of waste) are having a detrimental impact on the global environment."

(b) "Current consumer habits (for example use of purchasing and packaging, transport, energy, disposal of waste) are having a detrimental impact on the local environment."

(c) "Current consumer habits are leading to increased greenhouse gas emissions."

(d) "Greenhouse gases cause temperatures to increase and contribute towards global warming."

(e) "Global warming leads to climate change."

(f) "Climate change will have a detrimental impact on Northern Ireland."

(Q7) Are you happy with the state of the environment in and around Belfast?

Yes.

I don't know.

No.

(Q8) Please tell us which area of the environment in and around Belfast you feel needs an improvement? (Please tick: Need no improvement/ needs little improvement/ needs a lot of improvement)

- (a) Cleanliness of the city
- (b) Cleanliness of our countryside
- (c) Water pollution
- (d) Traffic congestion
- (e) Air quality
- (f) Noise pollution
- (g) Waste management

(Section 3) Your environmental management system and practices:

In this section we would like to know about the environmental performance of your business.

(Q9) Does your business have an environmental policy?

Yes.

It is under development.

No.

(Q10) Where can a copy of your environmental policy be found (for example company website)?

(Q11) Do you think that an environmental policy has, or could have a positive influence on your employees' attitudes towards environmental responsibility at work?

Yes.

No.

I don't know.

(Q12) Do you think that an environmental policy has, or could have a positive influence on your employees' attitudes towards environmental responsibility at home?

Yes.

No.

I don't know.

(Q13) Do you think that your employees expect continuing improvements in the environmental performance of your business?

Yes.

No.

I don't know.

(Q14) Does your business have an accredited environmental management system such as ISO14001 or Green Dragon?

Yes.

No.

We are working towards an accredited environmental management system.

(Q15) If you are working towards an accredited environmental management system, please state when you expect it to be complete (DD/MM/YY).

(Q16) Do you think your business can improve its environmental performance?

Yes.

No.

I don't know.

(Q17) Which of the following barriers are preventing you from improving your environmental performance?

Insufficient financial resources.

Insufficient staff resources.

Lack of knowledge regarding environmental management practices.

Not seen as a priority.

Other reasons

(Q17a) If other reasons, please specify:

(Q18) What would encourage you to improve the environmental performance of your business?

Increase profitability.

Higher customer expectations.
Environmental responsibility.
Improving quality.
Increased production.
Environmental legislation.
Image or reputation.
Other reasons.

(Q18a) If other reasons, please specify:

(Q19) Do you believe that your business can become more profitable by improving its resource efficiency?

Yes.
No.
I don't know.

(Q20) If applicable, provide any additional comments regarding your environmental performance initiatives.

(Section 4) The environmental impact of your products, materials and waste:

In this section we would like to know how you handle your products, materials and waste.

(Q21) Do you know where the products and raw materials that your business uses come from?

Yes.
No.
I rely on my suppliers to source products and raw materials.

(Q22) How are your goods transported to you?

By air.
By sea.
By rail.
By road.

(Q23) Where possible, do you use environmentally friendly products in your business?

Yes.

No.

(Q24) If you don't use environmentally friendly products, please tell us why not:

Cost.

None available.

Other reasons.

(Q25a) If other reasons, please specify:

(Q25) Do you think that global oil and gas resources will eventually be used up?

Yes.

No.

I don't know.

(Q26) Have you considered using renewable energy (such as green electricity) for your business?

Yes.

No.

I am already using renewable energy for my business.

(Q27) Do you try to save energy in your business (for example using energy-saving bulbs, lights with activity sensors)?

Yes.

No.

(Q28) Do you think that it is important to use water efficiently in your business?

Yes.

No.

I don't know.

(Q29) Do you try to save water in your business?

Yes.

No.
(Q30) Do you know how much waste your business produces?
Yes.
No.

(Q31) How much waste does your business produce annually?

(Q32) Do you know how much your business waste costs to handle and dispose of?
Yes.
No.

(Q33) If yes, how much does it cost per year?

(Q34) Do you think you can increase profitability by improving the way you handle your business waste (for example reducing, reusing, recycling)?
Yes.
No.
I don't know.

(Q35) Do you use our commercial recycling collection service?
Yes.
No.

(Q36) If not, why not? Please specify:

(Q37) If we provided an environmental advice point, would you use it?
Yes.
No.

(Q38) If not, why not? Please specify:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire and for giving us your views.

(Q39) To improve the quality of the data from this survey we would be interested in talking to businesses about their environmental experiences. Would you be willing to be interviewed by us about your environmental management practices? A member of our staff can visit your business to complete the interview.

Yes.

No.

(Q40) Full name of the person who completed this questionnaire:

Data Protection:

The personal information you provide through this questionnaire will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. It will only be used to communicate with you about this survey.

Your personal information will only be made available to the appropriate council staff involved in this exercise. It will not be disclosed to any other individual or organisation without your consent, except where it is necessary for us to comply with the law.

4 Covering letter

The questionnaire was sent together with the following covering letter:

Complete this survey to win a £100 Victoria Square shopping voucher!



Dear Sir or Madam

We are constantly reminded by both government and the media about the potential impacts of climate change on our environment. While the topic receives so much coverage we are eager to know what Northern Ireland businesses think of this issue.

We have attached a survey about the environmental focus of your business. Using this survey we would like to find out how businesses react to, and seek to address environmental issues.

We are interested in:

- your environmental practices,
- how your business attitude has changed towards the environment, if it all,
- whether you believe that good environmental performance creates a positive image for your business, and
- whether good environmental performance could act as a motivation tool for your employees.

We are currently reviewing how we provide services to the business community within Belfast. We will use the results of this survey to help inform our decision-making and improve our future communication campaigns.

We would be grateful if you could spend 10 minutes completing this survey.

The survey is online and has four short sections. You can move through the sections using the **back** and **next** buttons at the bottom of each page. When you are finished, simply select **submit** to finish or **reset** to start again.

All returned and completed questionnaires will be entered in a draw for a £100 Victoria Square shopping voucher!

Please return the completed questionnaire by **31 January 2009**.

Yours faithfully

Tim Walker

Head of waste management

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