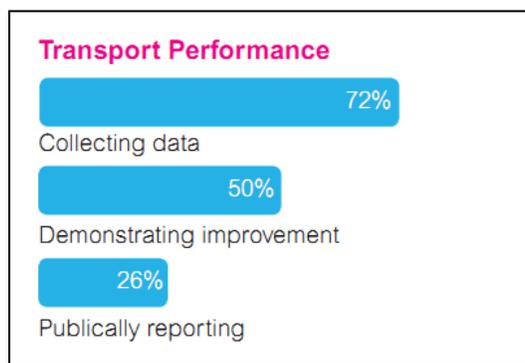


## ***Sustainable Transport & Business: An Overview*** – By Business in the Community

The 14<sup>th</sup> Environmental Benchmarking Survey undertaken by BITC's ARENA Network highlights an emerging issue facing businesses; that of commuter and business travel. Out of 129 companies who participated in the survey, two thirds have a sustainable travel policy and 72% are collecting data relating to their Transport. While this is fantastic, only 50% of these companies can demonstrate performance improvement on an environmental level with regards to Transport.



This highlights that while many businesses realise the need for monitoring and change, half of these have yet to implement it. ARENA Network are working with Fleet Financial to help businesses explore the options available to them, through a set of events focused on 'Tackling Transport' which provide a platform for presenting hybrid and electric vehicles (EV's) as an alternative to conventional transport.

In Northern Ireland, focusing on developing a more sustainable attitude towards transport within business is crucial. Companies are advised to first review their fleets, recognise potential areas for improvement or the use of more environmentally friendly alternatives and commit to choosing a 'greener route' for their business.

Companies may have concerns about the appropriateness of an electric vehicle for the needs of their business in regards to vehicle range. However, when fully charged electric vehicles can have a range of up to 100 miles. If 'range anxiety' is currently a deterrent from integrating EV's into a fleet, it is imperative to note that with the E-car initiative there will be nowhere in Northern Ireland further than ten miles from a charge point.

Over a period of six months BITC had the use of a Peugeot Ion, which was shared between staff as a pool car for meetings and journeys in and around Belfast City centre. Staff found the car extremely pleasant to drive, easy to manoeuvre and quick to accelerate. The range of electric vehicles available is growing rapidly with vehicles becoming available for a wide range of business uses. BITC's experience of Electric Vehicles has been extremely positive and highlights that while every business is unique, electric vehicles can have a part to play in almost every 'Green Travel' policy if thorough consideration is given to where they can fit into each companies operations.

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