

BCC: UK infrastructure not meeting the needs of business

Over a third of businesses don't believe that the UK's road and rail networks are meeting their needs, according to new research by the British Chambers of Commerce, released today (Tuesday).

The results, based on a survey of over 1,100 business across the UK, found that 39% of firms don't believe that UK's rail network meets their needs in accessing new and existing customers, suppliers and employers, compared to 34% that do.

The survey also found that over a third of businesses (36%) believe that the UK rail network is less reliable than five years ago, compared to only 17% that say it's more reliable.

Relating to the UK's road network, the survey found that 68% of businesses regard the UK road network as less reliable compared to five years ago, with only 11% believing it is more reliable. While 47% of businesses believe the road network meets their needs, nearly as many believe it doesn't (41%).

In the 30 days before the survey was conducted, 70% of respondents had experienced road traffic congestion, 57% motorway traffic congestion, and 49% road and rail maintenance.

As a result of travel delays in the previous month, 52% of businesses reported increased direct travel costs, 33% had been restricted in their access to existing or potential customers, and 30% had increased costs of products/services.

The results underline the importance of a focus on the fundamentals of the UK's business environment. If Brexit continues to distract the government, the necessary resources and investment will be diverted from the important issues in the domestic agenda that need attention, including the UK's physical and digital infrastructure.

Jane Gratton, Head of Business Environment at the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC), said:

"Businesses rely on the road and rail networks to connect with customers, suppliers and staff. It's concerning that many businesses believe reliability has worsened in recent years, particularly on the road network. Capacity constraints, congestion and delays in the development of new routes have left businesses frustrated.

"Transport delays can cost businesses time, money and potential clients. For the UK to succeed post-Brexit, we need to fix the fundamentals here at home. Investing in physical and digital infrastructure is vital to the prosperity and competitiveness of the UK in the future.

“Businesses also continue to report poor broadband and mobile coverage as an issue that impedes their operations. To improve mobile coverage across the UK, the BCC has launched its No More Not Spots campaign to encourage people to register their mobile not spots with us to help identify gaps in coverage. For the UK to be a thriving and modern digital economy, we must start with getting the basics right.”

Ends

Notes to editors:

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) surveyed 1,208 businesses from all regions of the UK online from 29 January to 14 February. Of the businesses surveyed, 94% were SMEs, 30% operate in the manufacturing sector, and 70% operate in the services sector.

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) sits at the heart of a powerful network of 52 Accredited Chambers of Commerce across the UK, representing thousands of businesses of all sizes and within all sectors. Our Global Business Network connects exporters with nearly 40 markets around the world. For more information, visit: www.britishchambers.org.uk

The BCC has launched a campaign aimed at eradicating not-spots for mobile voice coverage. Add your not-spot [here](#).

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