

SOUTH WEST TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE: SURVEY FINDINGS

On Friday 15 February, Stephen Henagulph, Chief Executive of Somerset Chamber of Commerce, met with Transport Secretary, Chris Grayling, to represent businesses across the Somerset region. Somerset Chamber were able to present the results of our Transport and Infrastructure survey and push central government on timescales for the work promised.



THE POTENTIAL IMPACTS

We asked businesses to rate how much of an impact the most commonly referenced infrastructure issues would have on their business if they were improved – the M5, A303 and rail links. The clear response was that improvements to the A303 were critical for business, with rail improvements having the least positive effect.



THE SOUTH WEST AS A PRIORITY

We asked businesses to rate how much of a priority they felt the South West's transport infrastructure was to Central Government, with 0 being no confidence and 100 being very confident. The average response was 37, showing there is a feeling that Central Government are not prioritising the South West infrastructure enough.



SIGNIFICANCE FOR INDIVIDUALS

When asked which one improvement respondents would most like to see in a free text box, alterations to the road infrastructure around major A-roads was a clear. The word cloud below visually displays those key words, with the most common occurrences taking the larger text size.



Henagulph remarked that many in the business community feel the region is not taken as seriously as other parts of the UK, calling on the Transport Secretary to provide an assurance that the South West would receive the recognition and investment it requires to improve transport infrastructure and enable businesses to grow.

Speaking after the meeting, Stephen Henagulph said, "This was a welcome opportunity to hear from the Secretary of State for Transport and whilst he confirmed that a number of actions are underway and funding is in place to support them, he was still not sufficiently specific in terms of timing for long-awaited projects such as the dualling of the A303. We will continue to work closely with our colleagues at the British Chambers of Commerce to keep the pressure on and ensure that these vital projects do not slip down the government's agenda."