

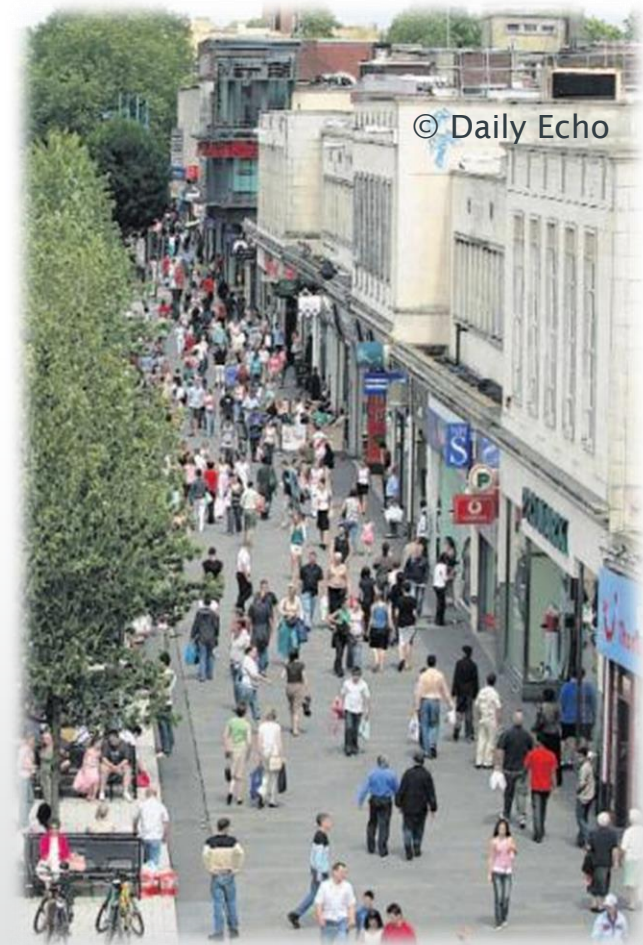
Businesses to invest in urban natural capital?

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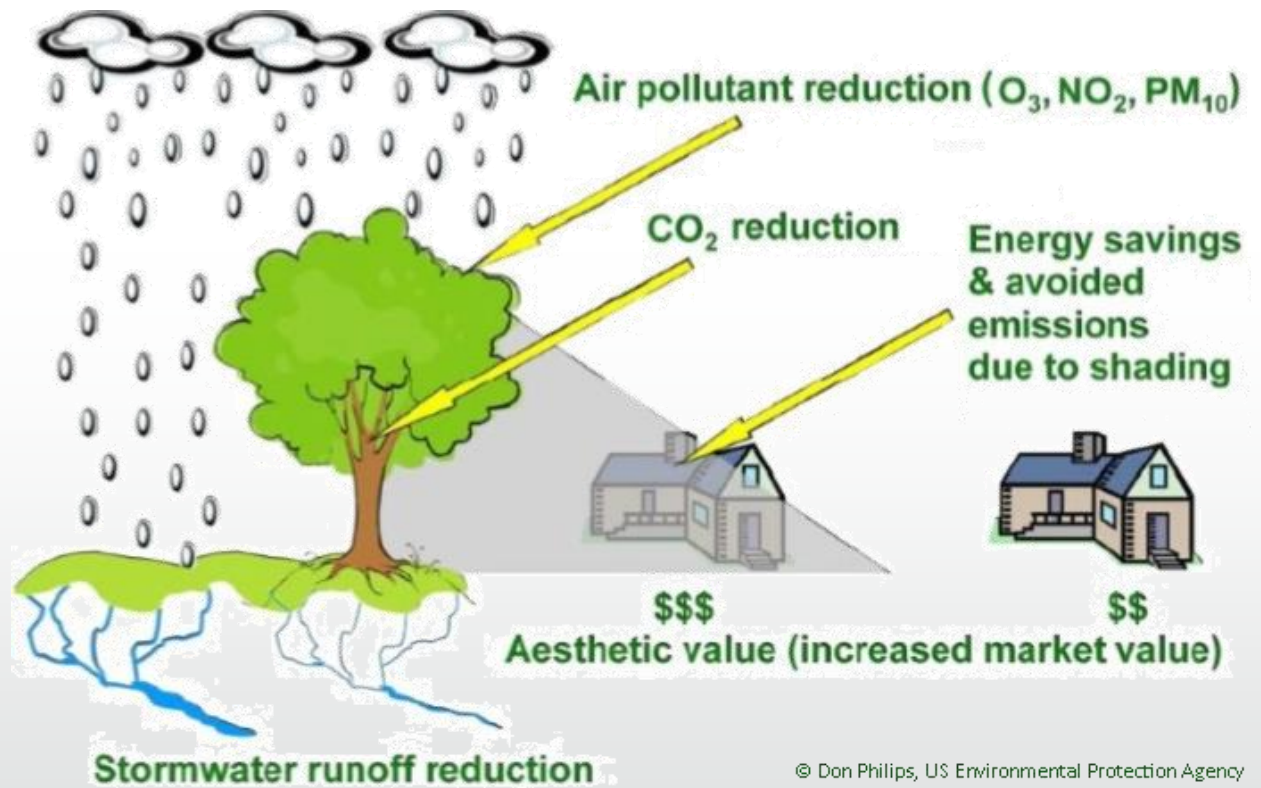
Valuing Nature Annual Conference, 13 & 14 November 2018

Outline of presentation

- Context and study aim
- Methods
- Results
 - Business attitudes towards trees
 - Business attitudes towards PES
 - Designing the PES scheme
- Conclusion



Context and study aim



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Research questions

1. What are business attitudes towards trees and the ecosystem services they provide?
2. What are business attitudes towards private sector investment in Southampton's urban forest?
3. What are business preferences regarding the operation of an urban forest PES scheme?

Methods

- Senior representatives from businesses in the Southampton area were contacted
- 30 agreed to a ~25 min interview
- Questions were closed (yes/no or multiple choice); follow-up questions provided detail where appropriate
- Responses were analysed in Excel (descriptive stats), SPSS (non-parametric tests), and NVivo (thematic analysis)

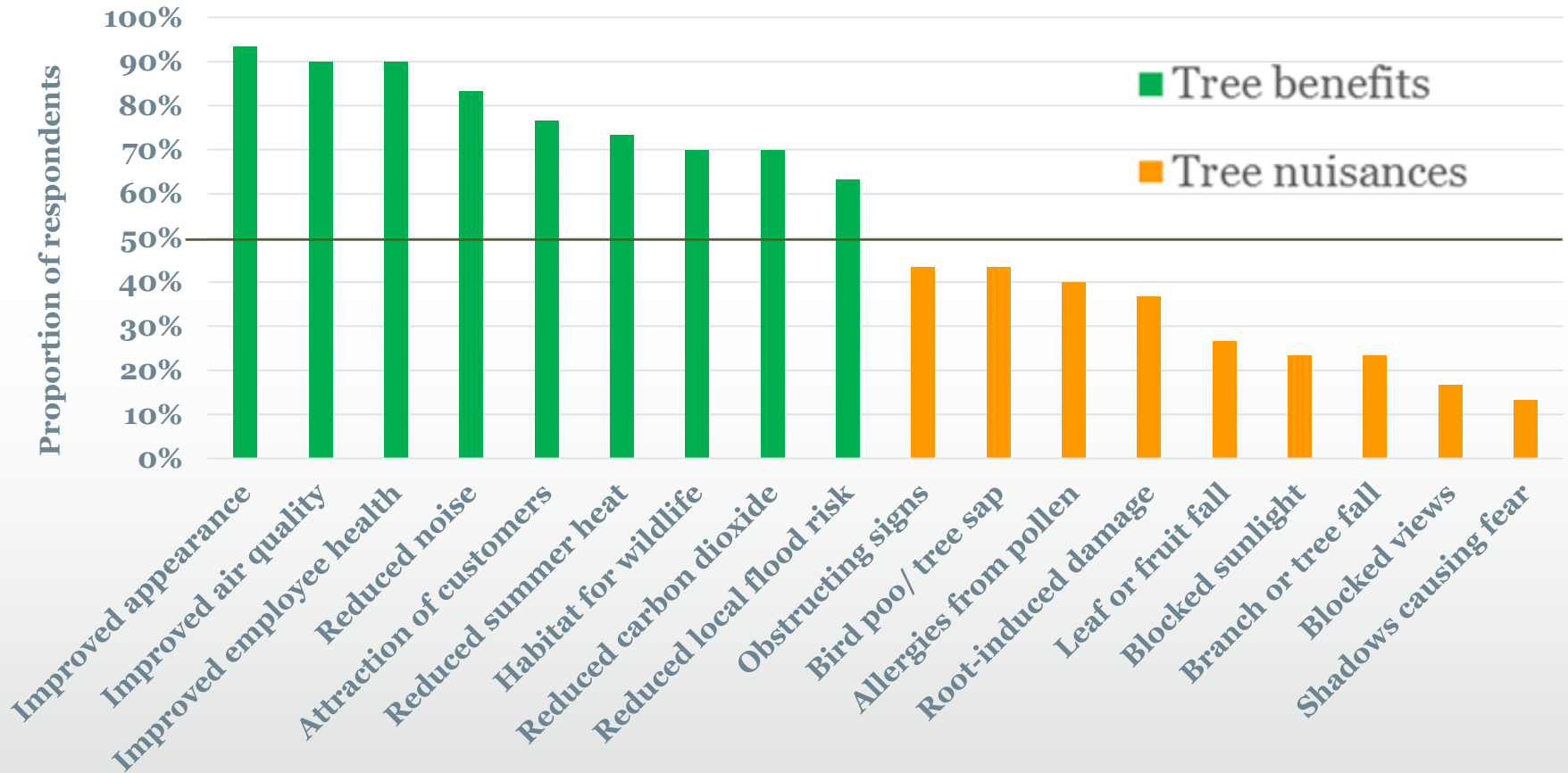


Research Question 1

1. What are business attitudes towards trees and the ecosystem services they provide?
2. What are business attitudes towards private sector investment in Southampton's urban forest?
3. What are business preferences regarding the operation of an urban forest PES scheme?



RQ1 - Impacts of trees on businesses



RQ1 - CC experiences (flood)



"Yes we have had surface water run-off cascading down a flight of steps in front of the building. It's not come into the building, but the risk is evident." (BR19)

RQ1 - CC experiences (heat)

*"I'm aware that some of the buildings do get very hot in the summer... [with] people in the buildings overheating."
(BR14)*



RQ1 - CC concerns



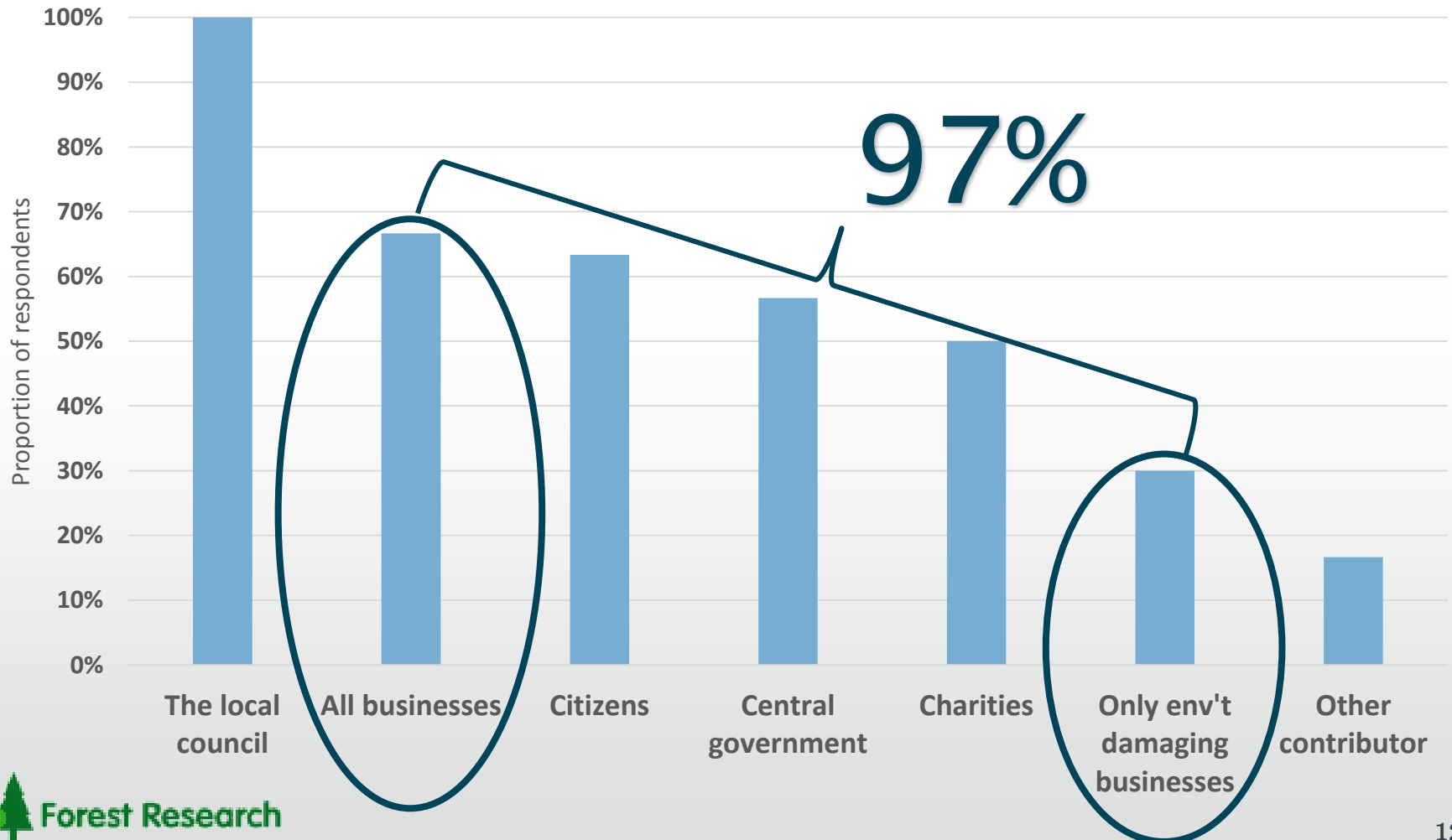
"As a global business we're absolutely concerned about the impact of future climate change. " (BR25)

Research Question 2

1. What are business attitudes towards trees and the ecosystem services they provide?
2. What are business attitudes towards private sector investment in Southampton's urban forest?
3. What are business preferences regarding the operation of an urban forest PES scheme?



RQ2 - Who should pay for city trees?



RQ2 – Should payments be mandatory?

*"Voluntary,
because we've
got so many
costs and things
like this."
(BR09)*



*"Mandatory,
because
[otherwise] only
those that are
like me will stick
their hands in
their pockets."
(BR06)*

RQ2 - Where would businesses invest?

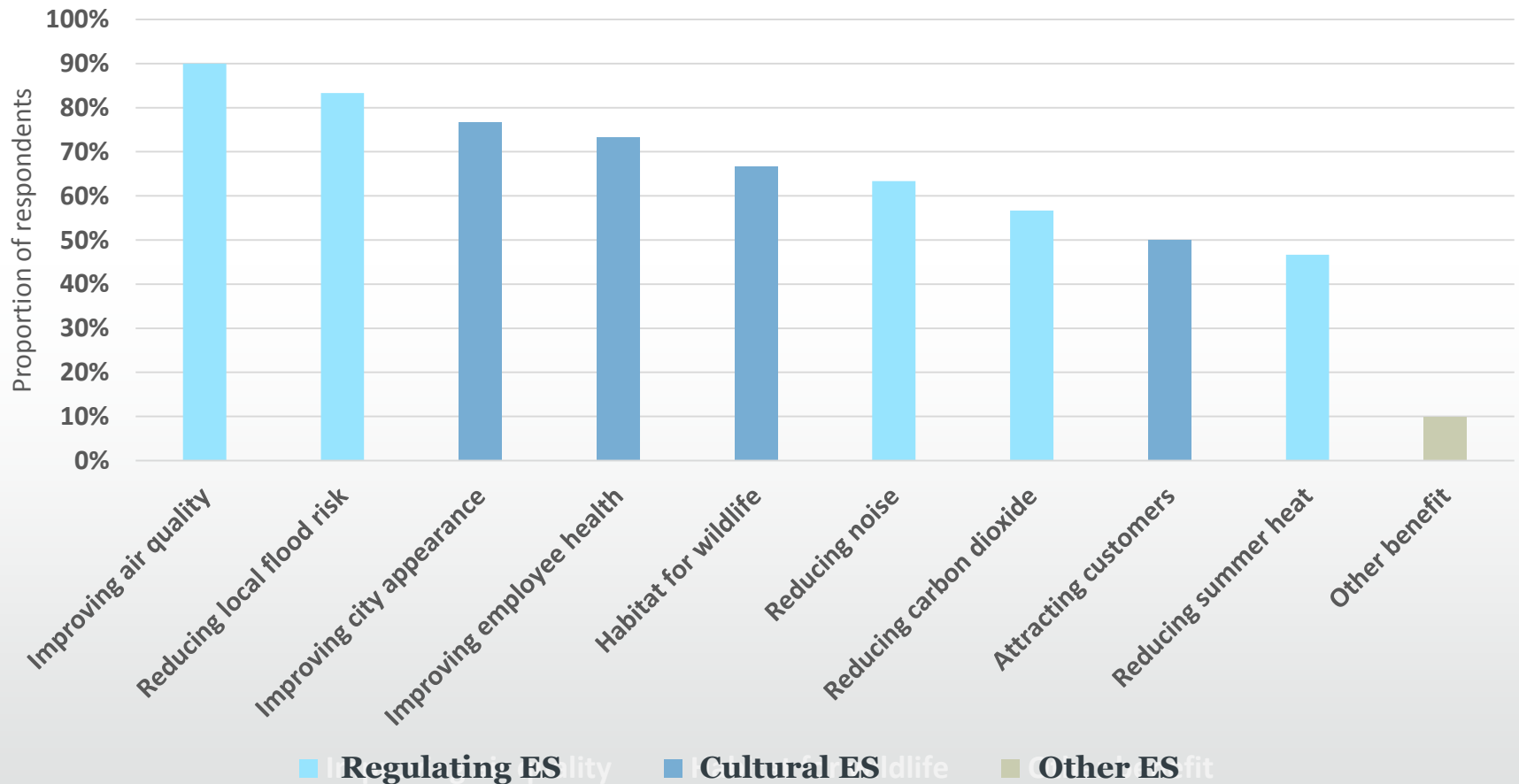
"As a business I would like to contribute to the city's trees as a whole, as otherwise it becomes selfish." (BR23)



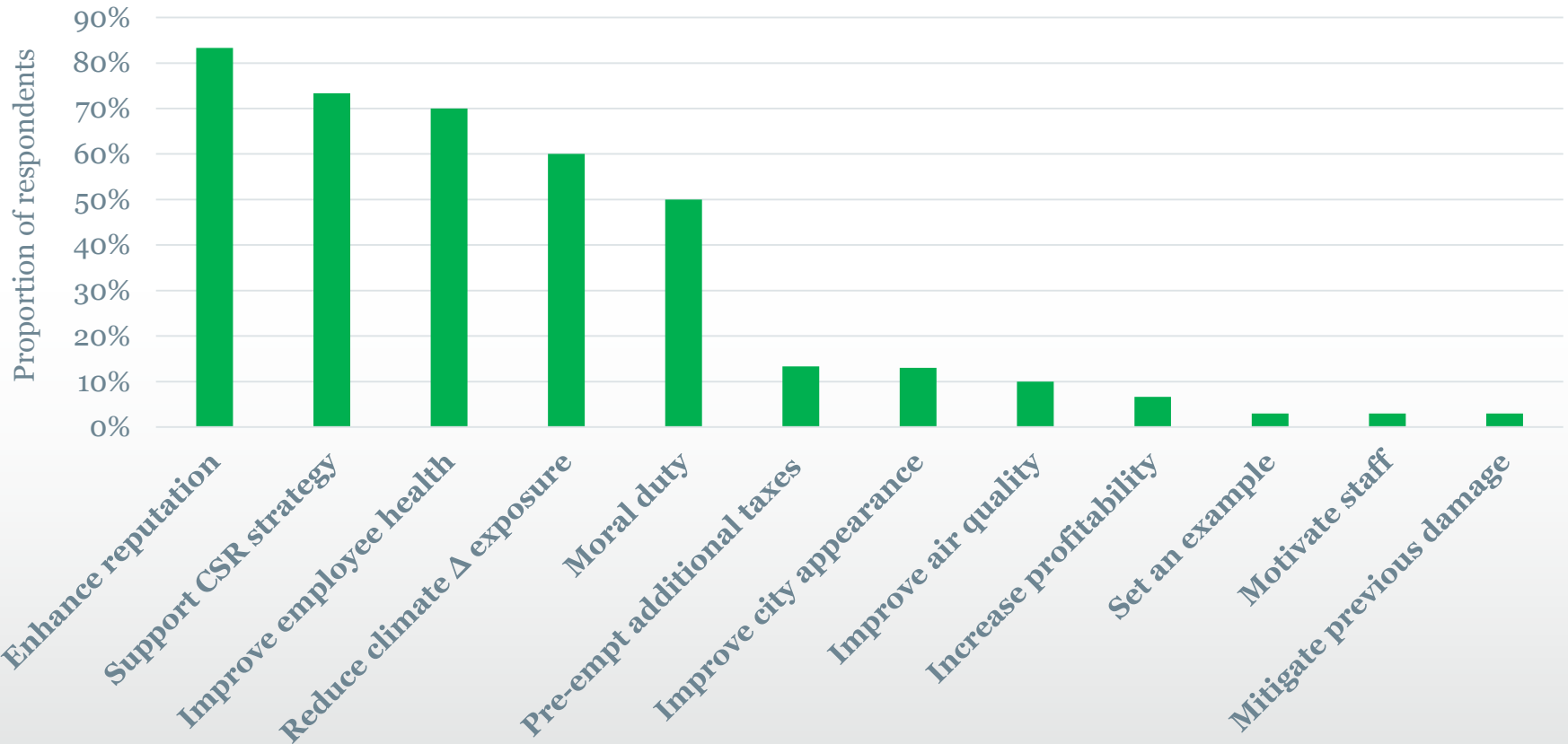
"We'd like to fund projects close to home, where we're actually going to see the change." (BR05)



RQ2 - *What would they invest in?*



RQ2 - *Why* would businesses invest?



Research Question 3

1. What are business attitudes towards trees and the ecosystem services they provide?
2. What are business attitudes towards private sector investment in Southampton's urban forest?
3. What are business preferences regarding the operation of an urban forest PES scheme?



RQ3 – Level of involvement in scheme

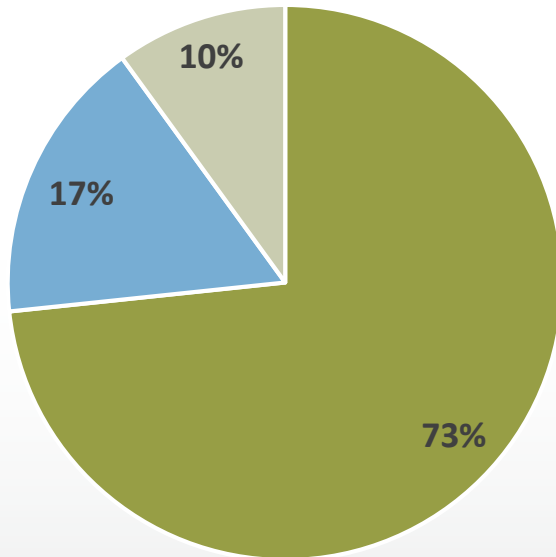
"Could we get involved [in planting and maintenance]? ... [That] would make the whole donation piece so much easier; otherwise it just looks like a tree tax." (BR25)



Partnership

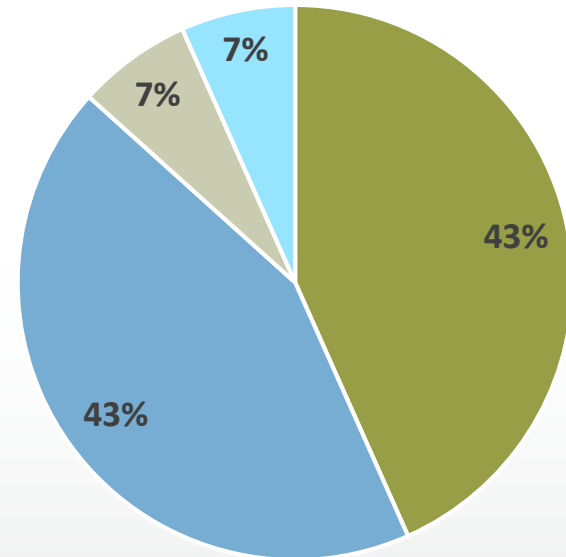
RQ3 - How should payments be made?

Preferred means if voluntary



- Fund projects directly
- Set annual payment
- Open contribution

Preferred means if mandatory



- Different rates based on business size
- Different rates based on env'l impact
- Set rate for all businesses
- Don't know

RQ3 - Information required upfront



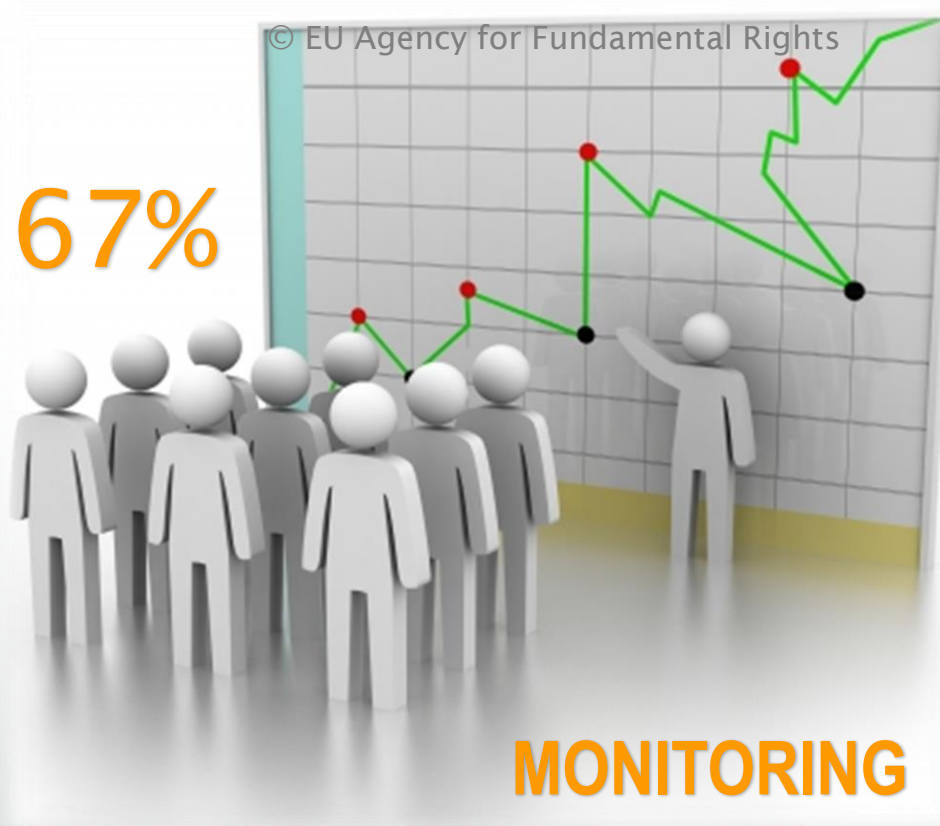
*"What you'd want is examples of 3 or 4 businesses that have had their businesses improved - and it's not necessarily financially, it could be the softer effects like wellbeing."
(BR24)*

RQ3 - Information required later on

*"Yes, we'd want it to be efficient.
We don't want the local council
wasting money and not doing things
efficiently, whether that's planting
trees or sweeping streets."
(BR16)*



RQ3 - Information required later on



"If we've invested in [trees] and then they're left on their own, we don't know whether they die or not or have been maintained. It would just be nice if someone came along and monitored them." (BR05)

Conclusion

- There was strong support amongst business respondents for an urban forest PES scheme, though voluntary contributions were preferred.
- To facilitate business funding of urban natural capital, clear communication of the expected environmental benefits and a strong business case (e.g. relating to CSR) are required, drawing on the experience of similar initiatives.

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