

CTS Winter Conference 2014

**Employer attitudes to sustainable transport
initiatives:
Perceptions of senior managers in North Bristol**

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Overview

- Research context : the Local Sustainable Transport Fund case study
- Research participants and methodology
- Research findings: interviews with senior managers
- Conclusions



The LSTF Strategic Employment Sites Case Study

Evaluating the impact of sustainable transport measures on strategic employment sites and business parks (2014-16)

- Commissioned by the Department for Transport
- Partners:
 - Hertfordshire County Council (lead)
 - University of Hertfordshire
 - West of England Local Authorities
 - UWE
 - SusCom and SevernNet
 - Slough Borough Council; Atkins Global Consultants

Motivations for the research

- Economic growth is a primary objective of the LSTF programme
- Little reported evidence of the impact of demand management measures on business activity
- ‘Strategic employment sites’ employ large number of workers but non-car access is not always easy
- These sites are under-researched compared to urban centres
- Business decisions are influenced by personal/corporate perceptions

Case study research aims

Seek evidence on:

- the impact of sustainable transport measures have on **commuting modal share** in the selected areas
- The impact of sustainable transport measures on **business performance** in the selected areas

Case study locations: West of England



Portbury, Avonmouth and Severnside ('Portside')

Photo: Bristol Port Company

The Bristol 'North Fringe'

Photo: Aga Szewczyk



Participating Employers

Portside

North Fringe

Number of businesses

9

15

Total number of employees

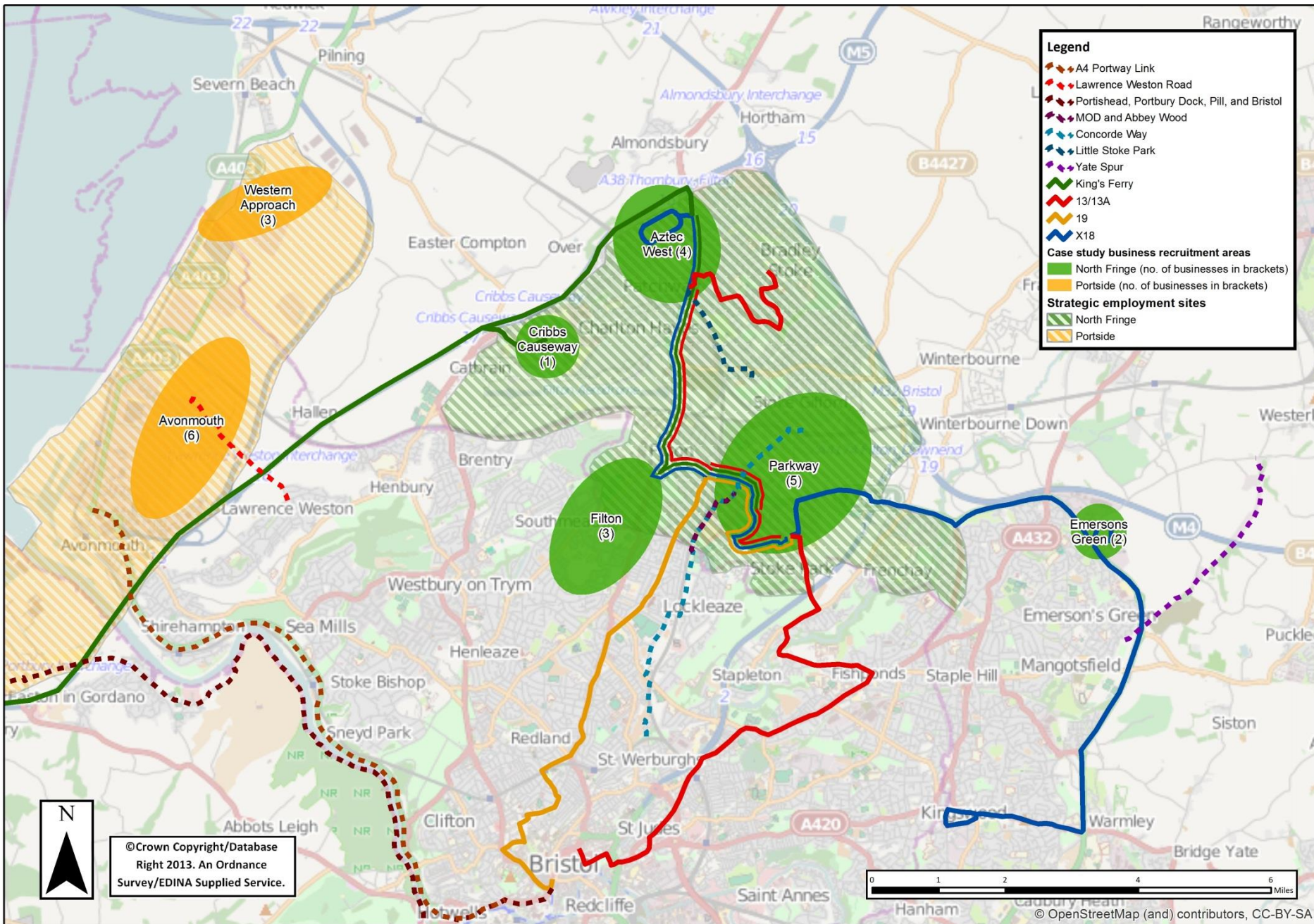
1,876

33,702

Economic sectors

- Distribution
- Manufacturing
- Energy
- Recycling & waste

- Manufacturing
- IT & Communications
- Construction
- Business & financial services
- Health
- Education
- Government



Legend

- A4 Portway Link
- Lawrence Weston Road
- Portishead, Portbury Dock, Pill, and Bristol
- MOD and Abbey Wood
- Concorde Way
- Little Stoke Park
- Yate Spur
- King's Ferry
- 13/13A
- 19
- X18

Case study business recruitment areas

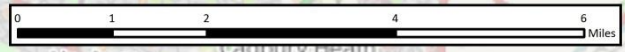
- North Fringe (no. of businesses in brackets)
- Portside (no. of businesses in brackets)

Strategic employment sites

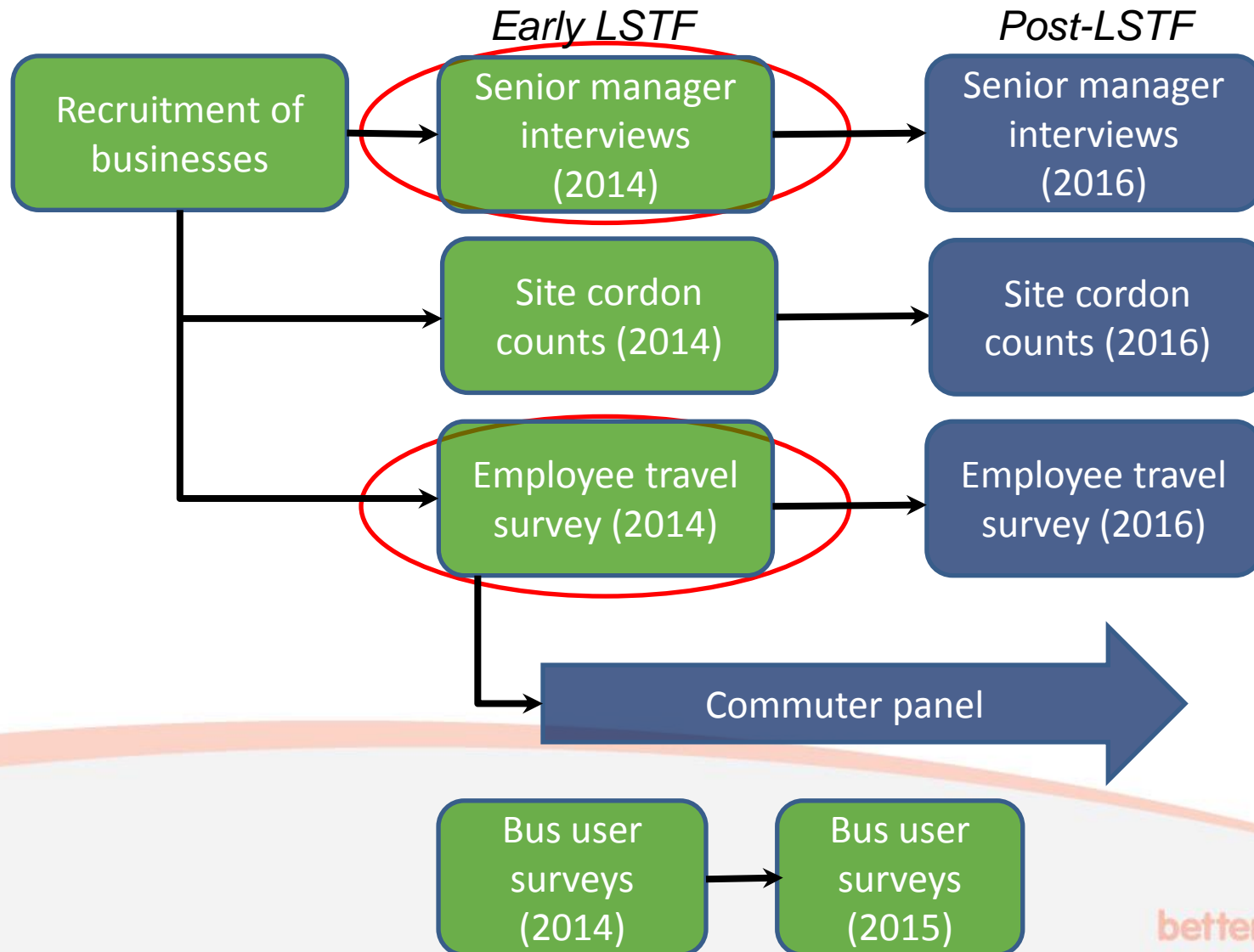
- North Fringe
- Portside



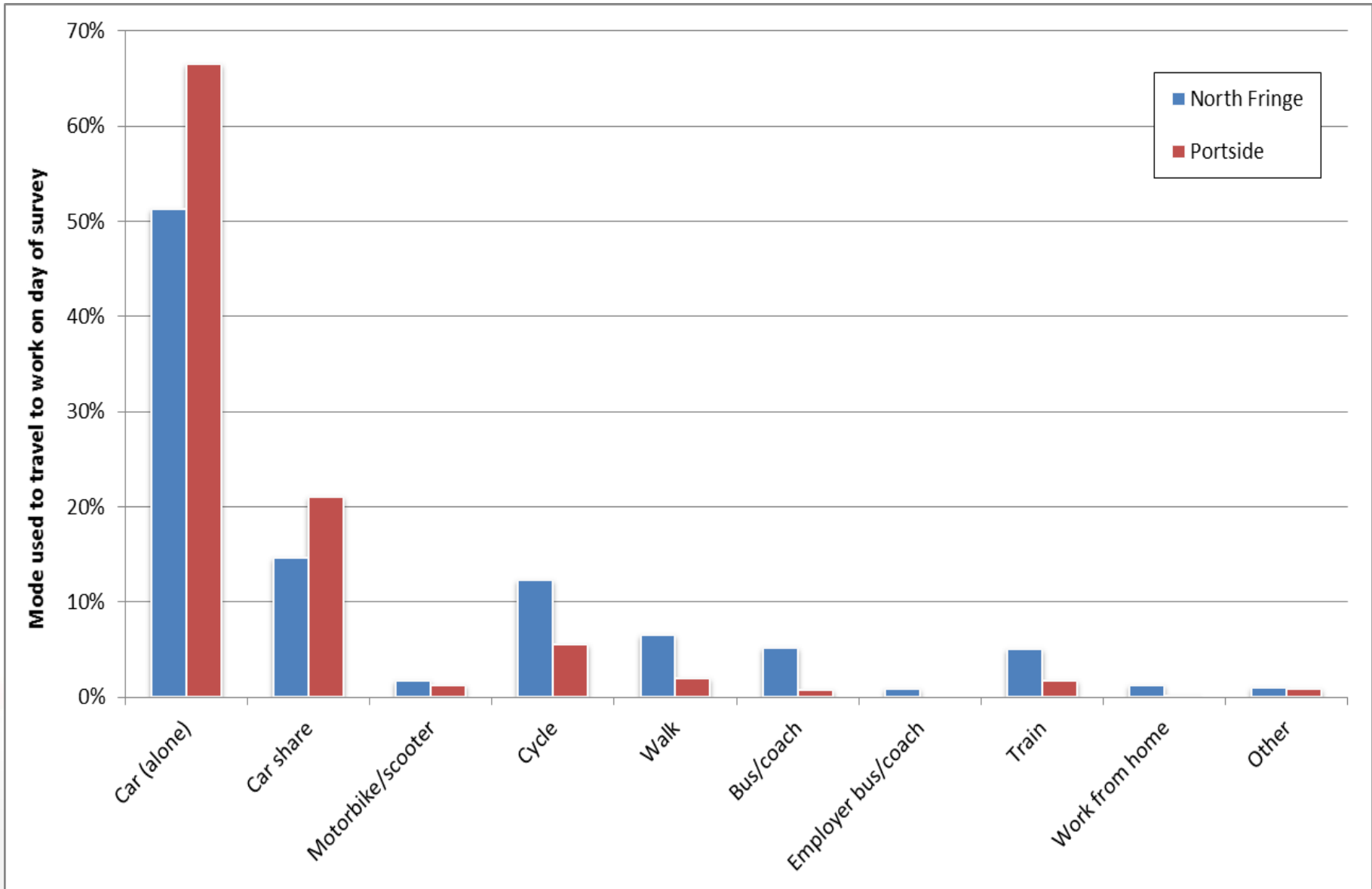
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Methodology applied in WoE



Mode of travel to work today: 2014 survey



Senior Manager interviews: research aims

To explore perceptions of sustainable transport within the context of wider transport issues affecting their business:

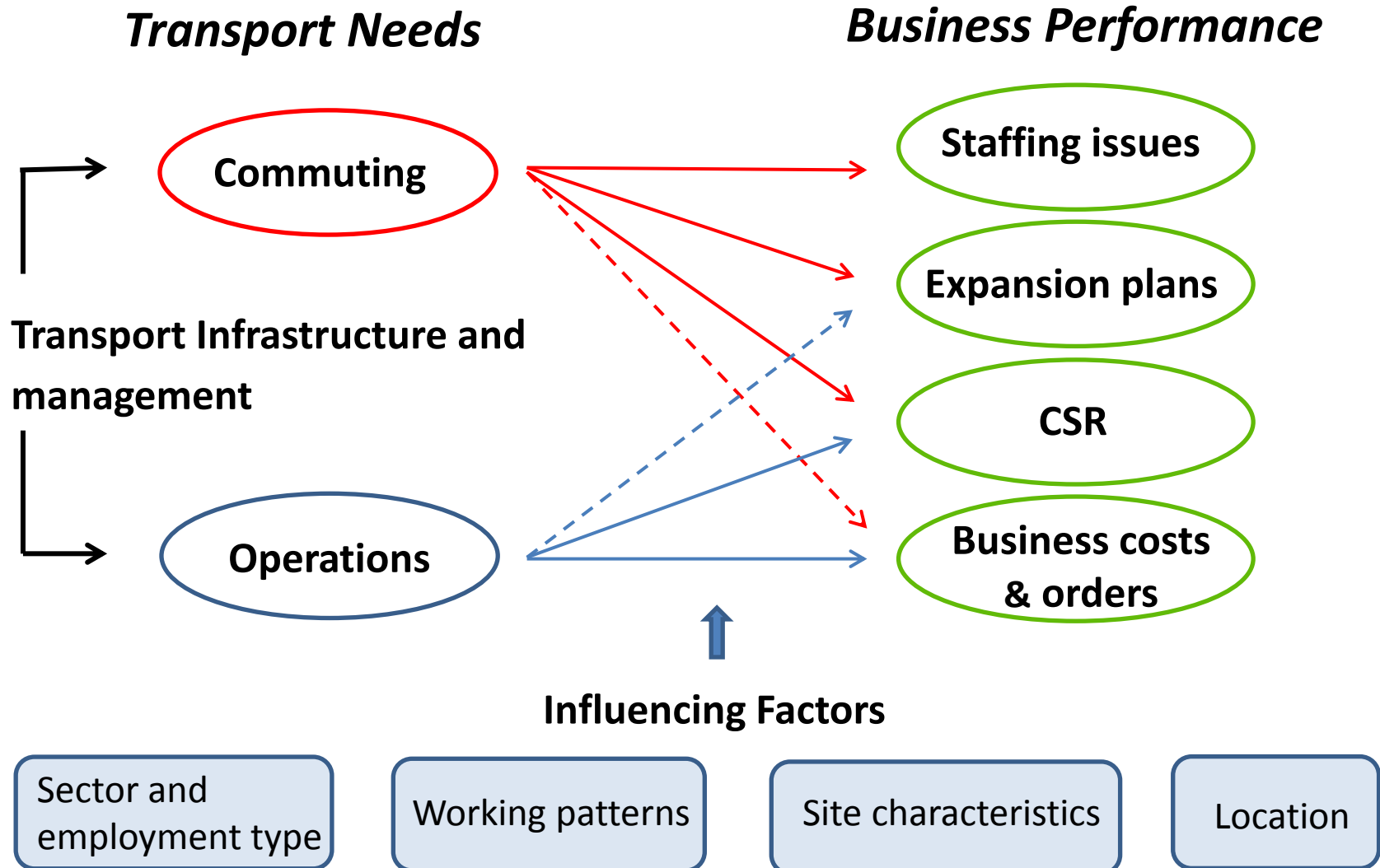
- The relative importance of transport compared with other business concerns
- Identification of specific transport issues relevant to the business
- Commuter transport issues and any impact they might have on the business
- Awareness of, and views about, LTSF and related interventions

Interviewees

Examples from the 24

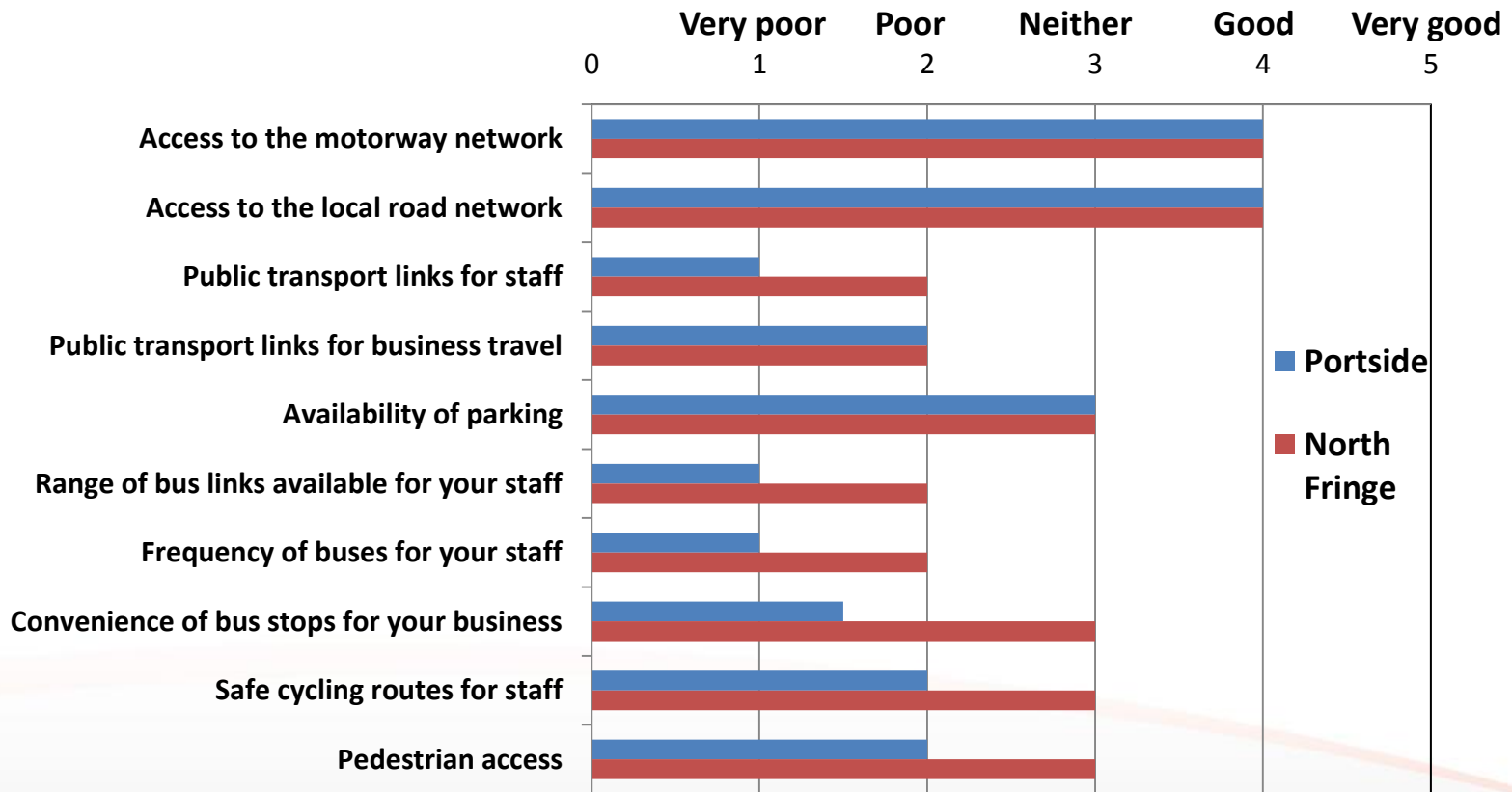
Employer	Interviewee/s
Airbus	Vice President, Engineering
Atkins	Managing Director, Atkins Communications
Babcock International Group	Managing Director, Infrastructure
Candle Products Company	Human Resources Director
Energy Technology Company	Finance Director
NHS Trust	Director of Facilities Travel and Parking Manager
Nisbets plc	Managing Director Engagement Manager
Seabank Power Station	Production Coordinator
Science Park	Chief Executive
Technology Company	Vice President and Director
University of the West of England	Deputy Vice Chancellor, Operations

Findings – senior manager interviews



Assessment of local transport infrastructure

How would you rate the North Fringe/Portside with respect to the following aspects of transport?



The importance of transport issues

“Well they’re right up there with the top issues for a range of reasons really..... Business efficiency - that’s important to us and an absolutely crucial question for us is the ability to attract and retain the right people and talent. The ease of getting to work and getting out to clients is critical in that.



Also we have a corporate responsibility policy which puts sustainability right at the top of our agenda”.

Managing Director, Atkins

Business operations

- Freight and logistics
- Business travel



- Staff travel to collaborating organisations within the area ('agglomeration effects')
- Shuttle buses, pool cars and bicycles for business travel

Business operations

- Corporate social responsibility

“In terms of impacting on the actual day to day operations of the business I would suggest it’s probably limited in terms of changing the shape of the business model, but it’s probably material in terms of having some impact on the sustainability or the environmental impact of the business.”

Director, Technology Consultancy

Commuting and staff satisfaction

“If the transport connections and the cycle ways were more developed, easier to use, more integrated, the ease of getting to and from work actually helps people’s satisfaction of going to and



from work rather than having a real struggle. So I think if it could be smoothed out and improved, it would help. Would it change fundamentally our business? No, I don't think so.”

Vice President, Airbus

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Commuting and staff recruitment

“We are trying to recruit a specific type of person, often there might be only one or two people who’ve got the skills we want, therefore you need to make it as attractive as



possible, and that’s why we ended up here. There wasn’t a great deal of competition in terms of cycle facilities and alternate transport facilities.”

Finance Director, Emerson’s Green

Commuting and staff recruitment



“Effectively we are deliberately discriminating against anybody that hasn’t got their own transport to get to work and when we instruct an agency to find people for us we would state that the person will have to have their own transport.”

HR Director, Avonmouth

Working patterns and the commute

- Flexible working allowed where possible so staff can avoid peak times (especially North Fringe)
- But shift workers not afforded flexibility
- Working at home encouraged by some, but not all:

“But we don’t promote working from home as a whole because the engineers need to collaborate”

Manager, Technology Company

Parking demand and business expansion

- Better provision of sustainable transport is an essential component of reducing car parking demand.
- On-site parking was close to, or had already reached, full capacity for several employers.
- Parking in residential streets seen as bad for community relations.



Views on LSTF and business networks: North Fringe

- *“I think it’s quite exciting to see what the whole thing has to offer really in the area with the transport fund.... it’s positive and it’s how everyone comes together to benefit the economy, I think that’s where it’s going to really get the tangible benefits.”* (Manager, Business Park)
- *“I think employers have a duty to step up to the basic steps each time that are put in, and then if you have further LSTF or whatever funds there may be, they then build on that and actually take people to the next level (....) There should be peer pressure and peer assistance between organisations to do that.”* (Manager, NHS Trust)

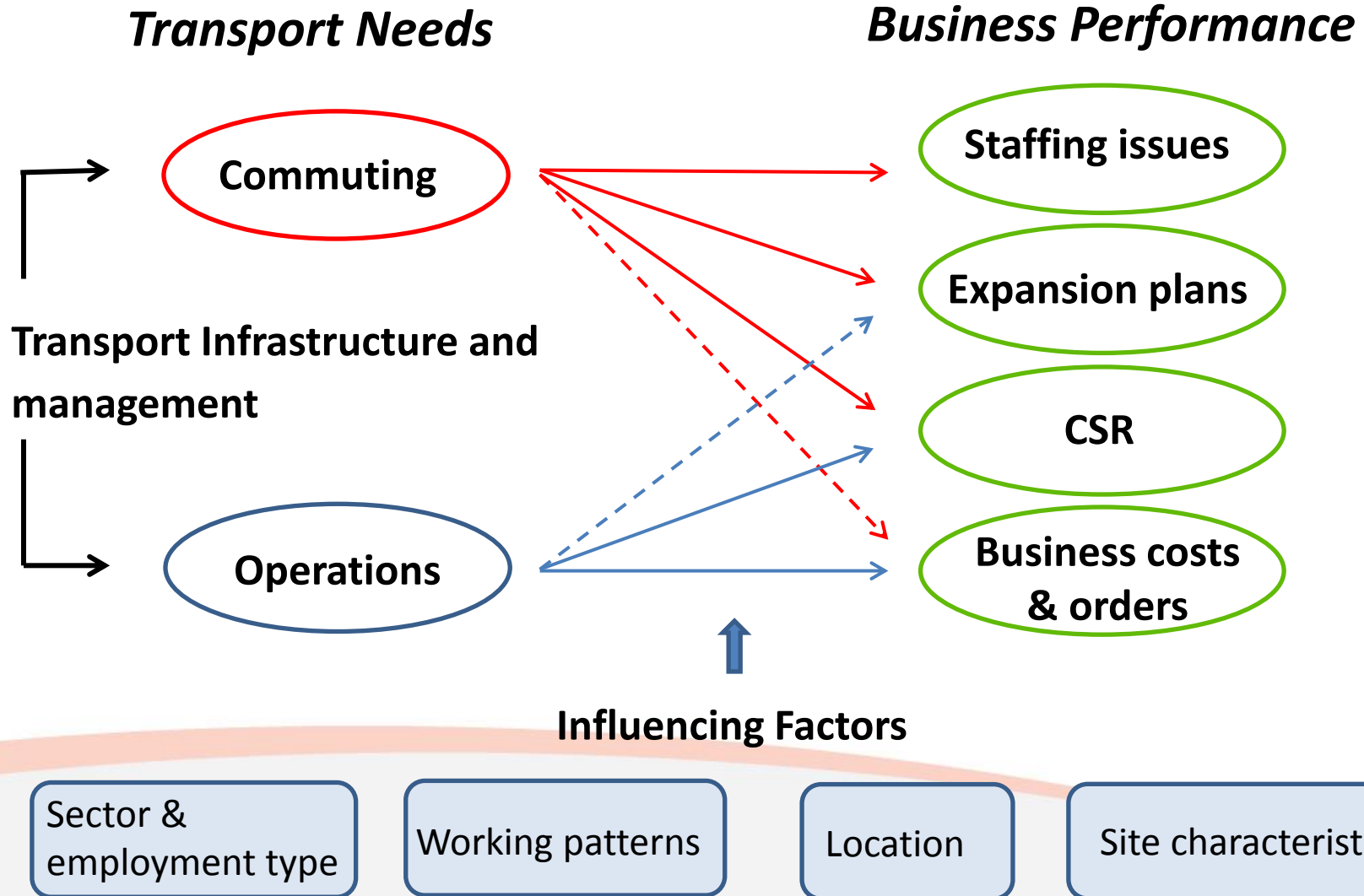
Views on LSTF and business networks: Portside

“What about Avonmouth? People have got bikes and lots of people live round here. This area is all about lack of infrastructure. I appreciate we’ve got to work with the Council to the betterment of us all, really. I mean, not just selfishly these bits and the people who work here, but everybody in Avonmouth. This is our community and, you know I’m proud to be here.”

(Managing Director, Nisbets)



Conclusions – senior manager interviews



Conclusions

- Ports area

Poor non-car alternatives to access employment sites perceived as a serious impediment to recruitment by some employers.



Better sustainable transport infrastructure and general road improvements needed to improve image and achieve employment growth.

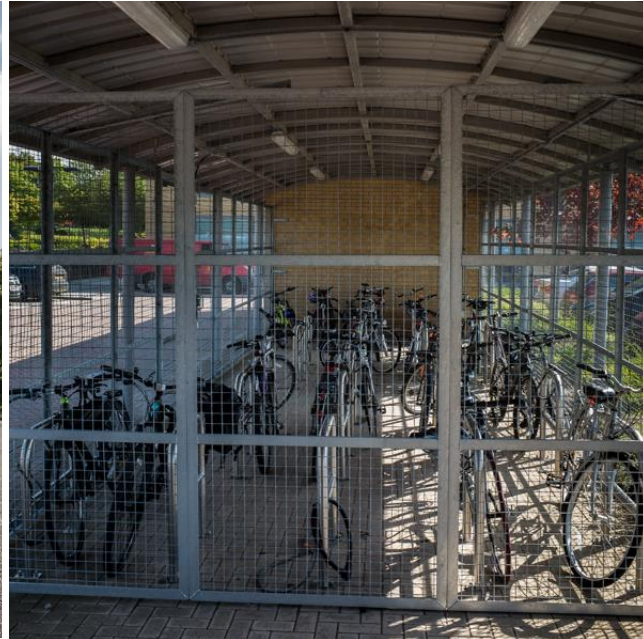
Conclusions

- North Fringe concerns about:
 - the potential over-burdening of the transport network as a consequence of new housing developments
 - potential limits to expanding their business in the area
 - Smarter choice measures needed alongside improvement to sustainable transport infrastructure





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